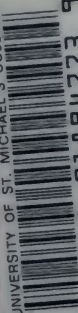


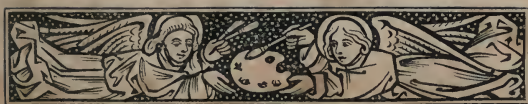
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LIFE OF
BEATO ANGELICO
DA FIESOLE.





See catalogue, p. 325, No. xxvi. (Pl. xvi).

LIFE OF
BEATO ANGELICO
DA FIESOLE,

OF THE ORDER OF FRIAR-PREACHERS.

TRANSLATED BY A MEMBER OF THE SAME ORDER
FROM THE FRENCH OF

E. CARTIER.

WITH INTRODUCTION ON THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN ART,
BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

AND COMMENDATORY LETTER OF
HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL WISEMAN.

"Chi fa cose di Cristo con Cristo deve far sempre."

"Who does the things of Christ, with Christ must always be."—VASARI.



LONDON:
JOHN PHILP, 7, ORCHARD STREET, PORTMAN SQUARE.
1865.

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COMMENDATORY LETTER OF
HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL WISEMAN.

LONDON, JUNE 18, 1864.

DEAR SIR,



SHOULD have been happy to accede to your request by writing a Preface to the "Life of Beato Angelico da Fiesole." No subject would have been more congenial to my feelings in every way. An "Artist Saint" affords scope for much, which scarcely any other subject could embrace and combine. It is a delicious theme, and inexhaustible.

Unfortunately before you spoke to me, I had already engaged myself to the full extent of my leisure and my strength. I need not specify what I had undertaken, and have been striving to accomplish. But I can say, with truth, that I would have readily complied with your request, had I been able to see my way to the work required, within a reasonable time.

I can, therefore, only give you this expression of my best wishes, in the sincere hope that a work as interesting as that of M. Cartier will be heartily welcomed by readers of every class, without any special recommendation from me. Standing purely on its own merits, it ought to prove eminently successful.

Wishing you every blessing,

I am ever

Yours very sincerely in Christ,

N. CARD. WISEMAN.

MR. JOHN PHILP, 7, ORCHARD STREET,
PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON.

TO THE REVEREND FATHER
HENRY DOMINIC LACORDAIRE,
OF THE ORDER OF FRIAR-PREACHERS.

REVEREND FATHER,



DARE not present this book to the public without the addition of your name. Permit me to dedicate it to you. It is a service I beg of your benevolent affection.

Beato Angelico da Fiesole is one of your predecessors, and you were the first to make me admire his masterpieces under the consecrated arches of the convent of S. Mark. I have written his Life, with the desire of giving a high and holy idea of Christian Art. But my work gives but poorly my thoughts beneath the pulpit of Notre Dame: and I place these imperfect pages under your patronage, in order that those who heard your words may complete them by their own remembrance.

When God chose you to re-establish the Order of S. Dominic in France, He gave you, with the zeal of the Apostle, the power of the Christian artist, to guide us to the truth. He now rewards you for the good you have done us: He withdraws you from the sad pageant of the world, and re-gathers around you the youth you have loved so much. At Sorèze, again, you teach the True and Beautiful; you exercise *the* great art, "*Ars artium, regimen animarum.*" You fashion souls to the image of God, by communicating to them the gifts you have received; and whatever may be the glory of your bye-gone days, you find one more beautiful and sweet in the affection which surrounds you. Happy are those who live near you, and know how to understand your heart.

May God bless all your works, my dear Father, and multiply the number of those who know and love you.

E. CARTIER.

COLLEGE OF SOREZE,

APRIL 28TH, 1857.

DEAR SIR AND FRIEND,



YOU have dedicated to me your Life of Beato Angelico of Fiesole; and in thus recalling me to the best days of the Order of S. Dominic, you have taken the opportunity of reminding me of days that are no more. I thank you for it. Like you, I think that God has recompensed me too much, by withdrawing me from the pageant of the world, and preserving for me in my retreat a pious wreck of the ministry which He had entrusted to me. I live again amidst youth, and love and serve them. What more could I wish in the decline of life; Nothing, if it be not the remembrance of those who have formerly known and loved me. You assure me that it is faithful to me, and you give me a proof of it in the dedication of a book, in which I am sure to find again the touch of an artist and the piety of a Christian. It is a great deal at once. So I leave it to God to recompense you, renewing for my own weak part, the expression of my high esteem and hearty affection.

FR. HENRY DOMINIC LACORDAIRE,

Of the Friar-Preachers.

[The Very Rev. Fr. H. D. Lacordaire closed his life at the College of Sorèze, November 22nd, 1861.—*Transl.*]



LIFE OF BEATO ANGELICO.

INTRODUCTION.

“ Chi fa coſe di Criſto, con Criſto deve ſtar ſempre.”

“ *Who does the things of Chriſt, with Chriſt muſt always be.*”—VASARI.



THE highest meaning of Art is the manifestation of the Beautiful. All its efforts tend towards that end; and the artist rests only when he thinks he has attained it. But what is the Beautiful? What is that power which ravishes the soul, and wrings from it a cry of admiration? What are its principles, its form, its means, and its end? Profound and mysterious questions, difficult to determine, above all in an age when pride of reason seems again

punished by confusion of language. Let us seek an answer, however, by examining the phenomena which the presence of the Beautiful produces in ourselves.

We perceive the Beautiful by the senses, but the pleasure which sound, shape and colour cause in us, does not stop with sensation. The animal does not see nor understand the Beautiful. Man alone enjoys it in the centre of his being; and if we analyse what he experiences in thus interiorly perceiving beauty in an object, we shall recognise that he judges by laws independent of that object: and it is the application of these laws that man approves.

His pleasure increases, when, by a natural motion of his mind, he ascends from effect to cause, and discovers the beginning and end of this application; for these laws do not exist by themselves, but reside in a being that possesses and realizes them, and the Beautiful thus manifested becomes a language which establishes a relation between two intelligences. A work of art is the expression of an idea; and he who sees this idea not only perceives if it is well expressed, but judges also if it is expressed with a fuitable aim.

Hence there are two ways of recognizing beauty in a work of art. If we look at the cause of its form and the means taken to realize it, we judge it according to the laws of nature; if we look to the aim of this form, we judge it by the laws of morality.¹ Under these two aspects, then, form may represent natural and moral beauty. Natural beauty is that which befits the nature of every being, and comprises intellectual

¹ Pulchrum habet rationem causæ formalis, bonum autem rationem causæ finalis. (S. THOM., i, q. 5, a. 4.)

and physical beauty. Intellectual beauty is the radiation of the divine Intelligence; physical beauty is the image of it, and can only exist through it as an effect through cause. What is called sensual beauty is merely a corruption of it, which diverts it from moral beauty, its true end. Moral beauty flows from the divine will, and regulates the relations of beings amongst themselves, and the correspondence of the finite with the infinite. The union of natural and moral beauty constitutes the perfect beauty which completely satisfies the soul; for it presents to it the True in its principle, and the Beautiful in its end. The Beautiful is a mirror which reflects the True and Good on the intelligence and will.

But what is the Beautiful in itself? What is its essence, its necessary form? How does it please the soul that loves and seeks it? The Beautiful is the evidence, the light, the splendour of unity; it is visible unity, the unity of being in its substance, principle and relations, in its elements and life. The elements of unity are, order, harmony and proportions, and its life is its expansion, its radiation in variety. The more objects unity embraces, the more beautiful it is; and in each visible unity we perceive through its relations a still greater unity. We ascend from the unity of a grain of sand to the unity of the celestial spheres; and thus, step by step, we arrive at the presence of God Himself.¹ We cannot now contemplate the First Unity, face to face; but we perceive it through secondary unities, just as we admire the

¹ A magnitudine enim speciei et creaturæ, cognoscibiliter poterit creator horum videri. (*Sup.*, xiii. 5.)

brightness of daylight in the thickness of the diamond; and this ray of the divinity set in every creature is its beauty, because it constitutes its unity.¹

The Beautiful, visible unity, pleases the soul, because it finds therein its joy, peace and repose. The soul does not exist of itself, and its centre and true unity is without. The intellect seeks unity by knowledge, and unity it pursues in all its analyses and classifications; and when it reaches the mysteries of the unknown, it hails unity again in that First Cause, on which its weakness may repose. The will also requires unity for love; it attaches itself to the unity discovered by the intellect, and all its desires tend to be more united with it, as with its life and chief good.

The Beautiful then satisfies the two-fold want of the soul, because visible unity is a flash of the infinite, a track of light towards the first and last unity, which

¹ Plato has said, that the Beautiful is the splendour of the True. Here are some other definitions.

Père André. The Beautiful has order for its foundation, and unity for its essence.

Winckelmann. Unity and simplicity are the two real sources of beauty.

Mengs. The Beautiful is a visible perfection, an imperfect image of supreme perfection.

Tieck. The Beautiful is a single and unique ray of heavenly brightness; but in passing through the prism of the imagination, it is decomposed into a thousand colours and a thousand tints.

Mendelssohn. The essence of the Beautiful is unity in variety.

Père Lacordaire has defined beauty, "The expansion of being in light, harmony, grandeur and goodness."—*Conférences de Toulouse*. Correspondant, 25 Feb., 1857.

S. Thomas of Aquinas says, "Pulchrum est cujus apprehensio placet. (1. q. 5, a. 4.) Ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur. 1° Quidem integritas sive perfectio; quæ enim diminuta sunt, hoc ipso turpia sunt. 2° Et debita proportio, sive consonantia. 3° Et iterum claritas: unde quæ habent colorem nitidum pulchra esse dicuntur." (*Id.* q. 39)

must be its happiness; for the soul finds in God alone the True, the Beautiful, the absolute good.

Unity is the aim of all the efforts of life, knowledge and love. Order, peace, family, country and happiness are nothing else but unity; and the beauty which makes it visible, gives to the soul a foretaste of heavenly beatitude. But this joy of the soul is fruitful. When the intellect has seen the Beautiful, the will is moved even to love. This impression it desires to reproduce without, and to communicate to other intellects and wills; it wishes also itself to manifest the Beautiful. Its means is Form: this word expresses the appearance of things, the phenomena that strike our senses. But external form is the manifestation of a spiritual one, the impress of an idea, the sign of an intellect and a will: thus taken, form is language in its widest sense; and by it art manifests the Beautiful.¹

The power of art is founded on resemblance to nature. Intellect and will have the same laws, live in the same manner, and can mutually communicate their life by interchanging their science and love. God is infinite knowledge and love, as the two great definitions attest which He has given of Himself. Under the law of fear, He said to Moses prostrate before the burning bush, "I am Who am, *Ego sum qui sum.*" Again, under the law of grace, He said to S. John, supported on His breast during the Last Supper, "God is love, *Deus caritas est.*" The first act of life is, to know; the second, to love. For us,

¹ A formis quæ sunt sine materia, veniunt formæ quæ sunt in materia. (BOETIUS, in lib. i, *De Trinitate*.)

Omnes formæ et motus in iis inferioribus fluunt à formis quæ sunt in intellectu alicujus intelligentiæ. (S. THOM., i, q. 65, 4. c.)

these acts have date in time ; for God, they have none in eternity. The first Being possesses a knowledge without beginning ; and the love resulting from it is as ancient and as great as the being and knowledge He unites.

God and man can communicate by art, science and love. Every work of art is a free act proceeding from the will. The will, indeed, requires of the intellect the means of art, which depend on the laws of nature, but these means are subordinate to the aim which the will proposes to itself ; and this aim must be subject to the moral law like the will. What is the moral law of art ? What rule must the artist follow ? And how shall we know whether his work be good or bad ?

The First Cause is the supreme and necessary law of the visible and invisible world ; and by doing what God Himself has done, the artist knows how to unite natural and moral beauty in his work. God has the perfection of art, because He has the perfection of being, intellect and will. Not only does He enjoy this fecundity, this internal activity, of which revelation gives us a glimpse in its mysterious light, but He shows Himself too outside His essence, by drawing beings out of nothing, and creating forms stamped with His own perfections.

Why is God an artist ? Why does He not remain alone in the bosom of His immutable eternity ? Since He is the beginning of everything, nothing can be wanting to Him and be added to His infinite happiness in the contemplation of Himself. If He has created anything, it is because, through His incomprehensible

goodness, He loved those possible beings He saw in His own thought, and willed to communicate to them, along with existence, the sight of that beauty which is perfect happiness. The goodness of God determined His power to create spirits and bodies.¹

Yes, by tracing back the course of ages up to this First Cause, the thought alone of which dazzles the understanding, we come to the solemn moment and ineffable beginning, wherein we can say that God made heaven and earth, and established relations between Nothing and Being, time and eternity, form and matter. That art of God is the type of the art of man, and if we study its marvellous workings, we shall find in them the conditions and law of the creative faculty, which is one of the finest traits of our divine resemblance.

Before the Supreme Artist took the work in hand, the form of what He had to make was in Him; and there it is still in all the unity and beauty of its beginning and end, without creation having exhausted or changed it any more than a mirror impairs the image it reflects. The first form of a work of art is in the thought of the artist. This form comes to man from without, because he does not derive his own being from himself. But in God the form is inseparable from His essence; because nothing existed before Him, and Nothingness is devoid of inspiration and power. This is that eternal form, the manifestations of which human science seeks in nature, such as the general

¹ *Cum Deus sit primum agens, primus quoque finis omnium necessarius est. Omne agens agit propter finem. Primo vero agenti non convenit agere propter acquisitionem alicujus finis, sed intendit solum communicare suam perfectionem, quæ ejus bonitas.* (S. THOM., i, q. 44, a. 44.)

laws of beings, genera, species, life, motion, powers and numbers, which regulate everything: truth immutable, which our ignorance is dividing *ad infinitum* but which we shall one day contemplate with a single glance at the divine light.

When God willed to reveal Himself to us in time and space, He created matter by a simple act which we cannot comprehend. Matter is inseparable from form,¹ but yet distinct from it. Form changes in bodies, without destroying the least atom of them. Created form is the outward sign of God, the echo of His Word, the reflection of His splendour; and as sign, echo and reflection are more perfect in proportion as they approach their model, so too the gradations of beings in the visible and invisible world are regulated by the distance that separates them from their Author. God and matter are the extreme limits of form; and the farther form is removed from matter, the more beautiful it is, and the more it resembles God.²

The Word, that *Art of the wise and Almighty God, in whom are all living and eternal ideas*,³ first of all created light, the most perfect sensible image of Himself. For He is the true light which enlighteneth men.⁴ Just as the Eternal Light is the life of the world of spirits, so is created light the life of the world of

¹ Deus non potest facere materiam esse sine forma. (S. THOM., i. q. 66, a. 10.)

² Omnis forma, quanto nobilior, tanto magis dominatur materiæ, et minus ei immergitur, et magis eam sua virtute excedit. (S. THOM., i. q. 76, 1. c.)

³ Dixit Augustinus quod filius Dei est ars Patris. (S. BONAVENTURA, *De Reduct. art. ad Theologiam*. S. AUGUST., *De Trinit.*, l. vii, c. 10.) Verbum Dei . . . est omnis forma et compago et concordia partium. (S. AUGUST., *Tract. in Joan.*)

⁴ In ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum. Erat lux vera, quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum. (S. JOAN. I, 4. 9.)

bodies. Who could recount its mysteries in nature? It is the element of form, the mainspring of motion, the necessity of all beings. Light is the instrument of the will for God and man. Invisible as spirit, quick as thought, it is everywhere potentially, and awaits only an act to manifest itself. Admirable in its external phenomena, it enlightens our eye as God does our intellect.¹ It discovers objects to us, and diversifies and reflects itself in colours, as the infinite in finite things. God has made it visible in the sun to enlighten the world, as He made Himself visible in a body to dispel our darkness; and that immovable focus produces the ineffable harmony of day, the unity and variety of colour, the gradations of tint, the play of light and shade, and the changing wonders of every hour, which seem to give life and motion to inanimate bodies.

God opened to light the immensities of space. For its palace, He created the stars, whose numbers and distances our ciphers cannot calculate; and He traced the paths and curves they have followed with perfect tractability from the beginning of ages.

The Supreme Artist then fashioned the earth: He stretched out the sea and main land, modelled the mountains and horizons, drew the courses of rivers and ocean-shores, decked them with verdure, flowers and fruits, and everywhere sheds life abundantly. He peopled the air, earth and waters with animated beings, and endowed them with wonderful fecundity: but it

¹ Terra nisi luce illustrata videri non potest. Ergo et illa quæ in disciplinis traduntur, quæ quisquis intelligit, verissima esse nulla dubitatione concedit; credendum est ea non posse intelligi, nisi ab alio quasi suo sole illustrentur. (S. AUG., *Soliloq.*, l. i. c. 5, n. 1.)

was only a preparation, a domain which awaited its master.

At last, God made man to His own image and likeness. He took a little slime to form his body, breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul,¹ uniting the beauties of the visible and invisible worlds in his two-fold nature. His body is a masterpiece, where science studies, as in their centre, the general laws of the universe, and all beings seem faithful and devoted vassals who recognise his empire. So great is the beauty of the body, that one of the chastisements of the original fall is, to have lost the calm and pure contemplation of it. But happily this beauty still appears upon the face of man. Who can even admire enough those harmonious outlines, those living traits, those supple endless lines, that commanding brow, those eyes, that mouth, those very hairs, a single one alone of which is able to wound the heart.² The face is the throne of life : there reposed the creative breath, which has given man his divine likeness ; there the soul manifests its most delicate thoughts and most fleeting emotions, with a fineness of tone and variety of tint which the most skilful pencil cannot render. Man resembles God by his soul. His intellect and will are in relation with the supreme intelligence and will, by the light of which they may be illuminated. The soul knows what God knows, and loves

¹ Formavit igitur Dominus Deus hominem de limo terræ, et inspiravit in faciem ejus spiraculum vitæ, et factus est homo in animam viventem. (*Gen.* ii. 7.)

² Vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum, et in uno crine colli tui. (*Cant.* iv. 9.)

what God loves ; and thus partakes of His life, His knowledge and His love.¹

When the Supreme Artist had created the world and man to be its master, He contemplated His work, and found it good.² Good is the true aim of art ; truth, its principle ; and beauty, its means. These three things are distinct but inseparable ; and the Creator has stamped them on every creature as the signature of His adorable Trinity. It is said that God has done all in number, weight and measure.³ In every being, measure represents the truth of its substance, number regulates its beauty, and weight determines the order and aim for which it has been created. Thus everything shows forth the divine power, wisdom and goodness.⁴ Truth, beauty and goodness are the elements of all things ; but in us this impress of the Trinity is elevated even to likeness and resemblance.⁵

Creation was good, because it was beautiful and manifested truth ; above all, it was good, because it was a means of union between God and man.⁶ Thus justice and goodness is the motive and rule of the art of God. He has been just towards Himself, for He made heaven and earth to tell His glory, and He has

¹ Omnia dicimur in Deo videre . . . in quantum participatione sui luminis omnia cognoscimus ; nam et ipsum naturale lumen rationis est quædam participatio divini luminis. (S. THOM., I. q. 12. a. 11.)

² Viditque Deus cuncta quæ fecerat, et erant valdè bona. (*Gen.* I. 31.)

³ Omnia in mensurâ, et numero, et pondere disposuisti. (*Sap.* xi., 21.)

⁴ S. THOM. I. q. 45.—S. BONAVENTURA, *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum*, ch. 2 and 4.

⁵ S. THOM., I. q. 45, a. 2.

⁶ Invisibilia enim ipsius à creaturâ mundi, per ea quæ facta sunt, intellectâ, conspiciuntur ; sempiterna quoque ejus virtus et divinitas, ita ut sint inexcusabiles. (*Rom.* I. 20.)

created beings to understand their language, and render back to Him an intelligent and free homage.

This external manifestation was not necessary, since the testimony He was giving to Himself sufficed for His justice; but His goodness was not satisfied, and He willed through love to communicate His happiness to us. He has reconciled His justice and goodness by leaving His predestined creature to acquire that happiness, by a trial in the visible world. God has veiled His essence: creation is a revelation of His hidden presence, which may lead man, by faith and love, up to the contemplation of supreme beauty.¹

The real aim of creation, then, is the homage of the creature to the Creator; and in the universe, man alone can render Him this homage. Natural beauty is only a means of obtaining it. God is its beginning and end: it comes forth from its First Cause clothed in the splendour of its beginning; but in order to be crowned with the glories of its end, a free act is needed, and that is moral beauty. God has prepared and revealed it to man: He has enlightened his understanding, but has stopped before his will, which must complete the work, and He awaits its decision. The free will accepts or refuses; if it accepts, the work of God has been successful; but if it refuses, it becomes, so to speak, useless, for the end proposed by divine goodness has not been attained, and the Almighty is constrained to demand of justice the glory He expected of love.

God has made man the artist of moral beauty, the intelligent and free voice that consecrates the world to its

¹ *Laudent te opera tua, ut amemus te; et amemus te, ut laudent te opera tua.* (S. AUG., *Conf.*, xiii, 33.)

Author; and for this He has created him to His image and likeness, made him capable of knowing and loving Him, and given him also means to make himself known to his fellow-creatures. Man possesses language, that internal word which makes him know his existence: that word which becomes incarnate on his lips, in order to reveal the thoughts of his understanding and the motions of his will: that unique word which strikes on the multitude without dividing or altering itself.

The orator is pre-eminently the artist. In every way, he penetrates the very soul of man. His voice modulates the sounds which communicate his thoughts with an exactness and delicacy of expression music cannot give, and his action speaks to the eye by gestures and attitudes the sculptor will strive to copy. His look flashes back the light, whilst the blood paints all his emotions on the features with the richest colours. He arranges the architecture of his discourse, sets all in order, number, weight and measure, and the truth which he desires to reveal appears there as in a temple.

Man is not an orator alone, he also fixes his thoughts by signs; he is a writer and literary man. His speech frees him from time and space, goes without him to the extremities of the world and to the remotest generations, communicates itself to all, and acquires an immortal posterity in intelligences. Language is the most powerful means of art, because it is the most free and faithful image of thought.

Man has other means. God lends him matter, and permits him too to create a world, in which he makes his sky and horizons, and distributes his light at pleasure. His chisel gives birth to the rich vegetation

of ornament, and his pencil scatters life by peopling it with images. But this world of architecture, sculpture and painting must be a temple. God does not lend man His materials and instruments to profane them; and it is necessary, too, that, when the work is done, the look of the Supreme shall find it good, that is, full of love and justice.

The art of man must be like the art of God, and its reflection and faithful echo, in order that this echo may be repeated and this reflection be reproduced in the souls of his fellow-creatures, and that all may acknowledge and praise the Lord. As the beginning of his art, the artist-man must acquire the eternal truths expressed by creation, and by his intellect and will communicate with the Creator; and when he has seen and understood His glory, he will tell it by his works, and strive to communicate to others the happiness he experiences in knowing and loving Him. Imitation of nature is not the true aim of art, for such imitation is always incomplete and rude, and is only the sign or writing of moral beauty.¹ To be just and good, the art of man must be a prayer and an instruction.

Has the art of man been just and good? Has the

¹ Moral beauty is the foundation of all true beauty. . . . The aim of art is to express moral by aid of physical beauty. The latter is the mere symbol of the former. In nature, this symbol is often obscure; and in clearing it, art attains effects which nature does not always produce. Nature may please more; for, once for all, she possesses, in an incomparable degree, what forms the greatest charm of the imagination and eye,—life. Art is more touching, because, in expressing moral beauty especially, it addresses itself more directly to the source of the deep emotions.

Form cannot be a form alone, it must be the form of something. Physical beauty then is the sign of an interior beauty, which is spiritual and moral beauty; and therein the ground, principle and unity of beauty exists. (Cousin, *Du Vrai, du Beau et du Bien*, vii. et viii. façon.)

pupil remained faithful to the Master's lessons? God had placed him in a garden of delights, where moral beauty was to rise towards Him with the perfume of the flowers and the incense of prayer. Adam's first life was the union of natural and moral beauty: natural beauty cheered his intellect, and moral beauty animated his will. Light and heat penetrated his pure soul, and the art resulting from this knowledge and love was but the rebounding of a light back to its source. The art of Adam was his song of adoration, the echo of harmonies heard within his soul, the emanation of pleasures felt within his heart, the admirable poem which consecrated creation to its Author: art just and sublime, art rich in knowledge and in love, art blended with the art of God Himself.

Unhappily things changed; and natural was separated from moral beauty. Unsatisfied with the fruit of the tree of life, which in the terrestrial paradise symbolized his union with God, man touched the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and made a disastrous trial of his liberty. He wronged divine justice and goodness, and became incapable of reflecting them in his works. Sin straightway weakened man's creative faculties; and his intellect, blinded by the senses, lost the intuition which without effort penetrated into the nature and relations of things. He had to seek painfully for truth athwart the doubts of ignorance and falls of error. The Beautiful was obscured to his gaze; and the will, depraved by concupiscence, re-ascended no more by visible forms to unity and primeval beauty.

By sin, man not only became incapable of seeing

and returning the Beautiful, but also impaired it in himself and in nature. The foul is the form of the body¹ and communicates its beauty to it. This beauty is the divine likeness which it has received from its Creator, and which it must increase by love. The great work of man lies there : and when death raises the veil that conceals it, the degree of likeness will be that of recompense ; for God can love only what resembles Himself : the rest is lifeless and abides in death.

By free will, then, the foul has a plastic power over the body. It increases or lessens its beauty ; and when sin sets it in opposition to its august model, the body, that masterpiece of the visible world, necessarily felt it deeply. Man's brow lost its radiant crown, and creation smitten in its centre, was itself infected with the physical evil which punished the fault.

What then became of the art of man ? Could it remain true and good ? By separating himself from God, man had been severed from his life. He had weakened the light of his understanding and the strength of his will ; in seeing beauty less, he was also less capable of rendering it back. Ignorance led him to confound the creature and the Creator in one rude worship. Concupiscence attracted him to the pleasures of the senses, and made him consecrate to his vices the temple God had given him means to build. In becoming pagan, art has been neither just nor true. It has been only a false prayer and teaching ; and man, without love for his gods and fellow-creatures, was an artist through interest, in order to acquire riches and glory.

¹ Anima est causa efficiens, finis et formalis sui corporis. (S. THOM., 1. q. 90, a. 2.)—Anima est forma corporis. (*Id.*, iii, q. 75, a. 6.)

How is this fallen art to be raised up again, and its original justice and goodness restored? The creative Word, who made worlds out of nothing, took still more admirable means for glorifying God. He united Himself to human nature, and thus at once re-established the perfect alliance of natural and moral beauty. Mercy and truth have met each other, justice and peace have kissed¹ in His person, and the new Artist gave back the divine likeness to man. By His blood, He restored to him life of the soul, light of understanding, and strength of will, and showed him beauty supreme even in poverty, suffering and death. Never was God more visible than on the height of Calvary.²

In offering Himself, Christ was infinitely just towards God, since the Victim was equal to the Majesty outraged. He was infinitely good towards men, because He voluntarily died for them; and the world, cleansed and transfigured in His person, can now worthily glorify its Author. In Christ, the art of man has again found justice and goodness.

Christ is the type and model of the artist. Perfect eloquence flowed from His lips; and He has left us by His Evangelists a book wherein truth, beauty and goodness are shown in all their splendour. In forming the Church, He gave the new plan of the temple which man must raise to his Creator; and its form, imitated by all the Saints, will be the eternal masterpiece of divine art.

¹ *Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi; justitia et pax osculatæ sunt. (Psalm lxxxiv., 11.)*

² *Dialogue of S. Catherine of Sienna, ch. xxvi.*

For eighteen centuries, the Church has continued the art of Christ. She speaks, writes, builds monuments, adorns them with sculpture and paintings, and employs every means to manifest the hidden God upon her altars. Her inspiration, principle and aim are there. To make Him known and loved, she displays all the magnificence of her worship. Not only does she consecrate her priests and send forth her apostles, but she chooses her artists, too, to enlighten souls and remove them from the seductions of falsehood.

Christian and pagan art are always at strife together. He who is not for Christ is against Him. The artist who does not raise the soul to God, detains it in matter; and turns it away from truth, in order to debase it in the enjoyments of the body; whilst he who offers it the doctrine of the Gospel, prepares the likeness which makes it participate in the divine life and beauty. No one can remain indifferent to these two arts, for in their struggle man's destiny is decided.

Pagan and Christian art have a history. Their remains cover the earth like bones blanched on a battle-field. But knowledge, like the prophet Ezekiel, can make those bones to live again, and give them back their forms and souls. They shall be raised again, and render homage to the Lord.¹

The broken monuments of nations are witnesses that tell the causes of their greatness and decay. A people's art is the expression of a doctrine; and the relation of this doctrine to truth explains that

¹ Et dabo vobis spiritum, et vivetis, et scietis quia ego Dominus. (*Ezech.* xxxvii, 6.)

people's lot, and the diversity between the fetich of the savage and the statues of Phidias.

Amongst the ancients, pagan art was inspired by the remnants of a primitive revelation. God and matter, truth and error, were learnedly mingled together, and presented to man's adoration in sumptuous temples and under sensible forms. Pagan art would never have developed itself without this scientific and religious basis; it could have presented nothing to the senses but the grossest enjoyments. But man cannot entirely drive God away from his intellect. Whatever his voluntary degradation may be, the idea of a First Cause, and the principles flowing from it, are always there, to perpetuate or repair his errors. This moral germ art was able to receive without Christianity; and such imperfect knowledge of truth sufficed to develope taste for the Beautiful amongst the nations seated in the shadow of death.

This explains the brilliant destinies of pagan art in the East. There, religion gave men the genius and patience to raise the gigantic marvels of India and the granite temples of Egypt, the proportions and details of which still surprise us by their mysterious beauties. Art there shows itself in the silence of adoration and in the immobility of fear. But beneath the sweeter sky of Greece, religion, freed from sacerdotal autocracy, had poets for apostles, and gave rise to artists, of whom Phidias was the king. Athens built her Parthenon, and pagan art produced masterpieces which it was impossible for it to renew.

Why this impossibility? Why had Phidias only degenerate successors, since progress seems natural to

man? Why this decline, so evident and so rapid? The cause is very simple. Pagan art owed its wonders to its religious beliefs; these beliefs fell before the examination of reason, and art bent with them. The martyrdom of Socrates was the beginning of this double ruin: Greek religion and art perished together, and Plato alone made their noble obsequies.

What became of pagan art when reason had chased it from its imaginary Olympus? It went to serve in the train of Alexander's successors, until a Proconsul, meeting it in a crossway of Corinth, led it to Rome, and gave it as a slave to the Emperors. Art had then to knead the bricks, build amphitheatres, raise gilded houses for Nero, and replace the head of its ancient gods by that of Caligula. But these humiliations were not enough. Reason had impoverished it, and faith came to give it incurable wounds. It still had enjoyments and honours in the palaces of the Cæsars. But what was left to it when Christianity had planted the Cross of Calvary on the Capitol? Shame became its portion, and it was condemned to the guilty existence of those who speculate in vice and work in the shade.

After having signalized the causes of the greatness and fall of pagan art, let us rapidly examine the history of Christian art. When the songs of the earthly paradise had ceased, and man was doomed to toil and tears, a merciful promise came to mitigate the sentence. It was proclaimed that the woman should crush the serpent's head, and Christ be lifted up between heaven and earth, as the sign of the new alliance. The Redeemer of the world marked out for Himself through ages a prophetic path, in which the Patri-

archs hailed His mysterious passage, and art, regenerated by His unseen presence, was enabled to resume its glorious destinies.

We see it, from the very first, raising altars to God, and offering sacrifices which were to be, among every people, the indelible evidence of the fall, and the universal symbol of the atonement. Art, true and good, under the mild features of Abel, offers the choice of his flocks to his Creator, whilst on its side egotistic art, in the person of Cain, keeps its best ears of corn, and becomes unjust and homicidal. At the coming out from the ark, God chose adorers for Himself: and whilst the pride of man, who would fain raise an everlasting monument of his power, is punished by the confusion of languages, and goes carrying afar his errors, faithful art finds an asylum beneath the tent of Abraham, and in traversing Egypt prepares itself for the greatness awaiting it in the desert.

To lay hold of Christian art aright in its whole, it must be remembered that the revealed truth is as old as the world. Christ has not come to change, but to complete it. Just as Christianity dates from the first man, so Christian art must find its glorious origin in the Old Testament. Whether before or after the coming of the Saviour, Christ has always been its inspiration. Are not the canticles of the Church those of the temple of Solomon? We date Christian art from the time when it clothed itself for us with material forms. But architecture, sculpture and painting are only the means of art; its life and soul is eloquence and poetry, that exuberance of the mind and heart, that richness of images and affections,

which overwhelm us with a victorious light and heat. Let us put the Bible in one scale of the balance, and heap into the other the masterpieces of pagan art, and we shall see on which side the advantage will remain. If under the Old Law Christian art did not put on all the ornaments which the chisel and pencil could give it, it was owing to an order emanating from the wisdom of God Himself. Providence wished to separate and distinguish His people from the nations who had made idols to themselves. But Christian art did not the less preserve a lawful and indisputable superiority.

We have seen Greece giving to pagan art its finest developments; but now that the great days of Athens and of Jerusalem are no more, let us compare them by what they have left us. Literature is the principal and fundamental part of art: by it others are inspired and nurtured. Who would dare to deny a brilliant victory to the books of the Hebrews? In vain have the Greek authors preserved their harmonious forms; their rivals, weakened by translators, dread not the contest. Behold them in the ode, which is the truest and most lofty style of poetry. Can the factitious and venal enthusiasm of Pindar, or the voluptuous and frivolous verses of Anachreon, be compared with the songs of David, so full of sincere adoration and radiant majesty? Will the diffuseness of Herodotus be set against the admirable simplicity of Moses, the jests of Socrates against the maxims of Solomon, or the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides against the afflictions of Job and the lamentations of Jeremias? Is it not just to give the crown of genius to those who have already that of a divine and royal antiquity?

Yes, under the Old Law, Christian art was a magnificent chant, which began with Moses, the conqueror of Egypt on the shores of the Red Sea, and was ended by the aged Simeon, when at last he received into his arms Him who was the inspirer and hero of it. The celestial harp given to announce the Desired of Nations and to soothe the expectation of Him, passed from the hands of Aaron's sister to Judith and Debora; Tobias carried it into exile; Israel hung it on the willows of the rivers of Babylon; and Mary, to celebrate her divine maternity, drew a last harmony from it, before she gave it to the Church, to make her festal praise resound.

We must not believe, however, that before Christ Christian art had only a literary glory. God willed that it should prelude, so to speak, its future magnificence. He chose skilful artists to work the materials, and Himself traced out for Moses the plan of the holy ark which Solomon was to place in his temple.¹ The pages describing that monument of Jewish worship, may give some idea of it; but the facts of profane history prove still better its grandeur and beauty. When Alexander, who knew all the wonders of Greece, visited the second temple, which caused regret and tears in those who had seen the ancient one, he was struck with astonishment and reverence; and the Ptolemies, his successors, who reigned over the most civilized city of

¹ Locutusque est Dominus ad Moysen, dicens: Ecce vocavi ex nomine Beseleel filium Uri, filii Hur de tribu Juda, et implevi eum spiritu Dei, sapientia, et intelligentia, et scientia in omni opere, ad excogitandum quicquid fabrefieri potest ex auro, et argento, et ære, marmore, et gemmis, et diversitate lignorum. Dedique ei socium Ooliab filium Achisamech de tribu Dan. Et in corde omnis eruditi posui sapientiam, ut faciant cuncta quæ præcipi tibi. (*Exod.* xxxi.)

the world, continued to honour it with their offerings. Now the temple of Jerufalem is destroyed, its spoils have adorned the triumph of Titus, the prophecy of Chrift is accomplished, and a new era has begun for man and Chriftian art.

The Church, patient as her eternal Author, did not haftily give art all its development. It was neceffary, firft of all, to communicate to fouls the fcience and love ſhe poffeffed; and when man had purified his mind and heart in the martyr's fufferings, ſhe reftored to him the ufe of the material forms which Greeks and Romans had fo much profaned. - Artifts under the Emperors, not knowing what to make of a divinity difcredited by reafon, had ſquandered it on beings the misfortune and ſhame of the world: they perfonified power and virtue under the features of Tiberius, Nero and Meffalina!

When contempt had done juſtice to thoſe infamous apotheoſes, and the idols were overthrown and the temples deſerted, Chriftian art began its work. The Church had given it the programme: the Bible completed by the Goſpel; God viſible in Chrift, as the ſupreme type; His beauty reflected in the Virgin and in the Saints. To this theme of inexhauftible fecundity the Church joined again a ſymboliſm which extends the ſphere of art, and multiplies its means of celebrating the conflicts and triumphs of Chrift. The teachings of S. Hilary, of S. John Chryfoſtom, and of S. Ambroſe fell from the ſacred pulpit like fruitful feed, and S. Auguſtine gave artifts admirable eſthetics in his treatiſe *De Verâ Religione*.

Chriftian art, ſetting out from Rome with the

preachers of the gospel, extended its peaceful conquests to the East and West, making itself all to all, and varying its means according to the climate and genius of the people. At Constantinople, it put on the peculiar form called Byzantine art, which has been too much praised or depreciated. The artists of Byzantium necessarily underwent the sad influence of the corruption of the Lower Empire, and ended, like the Greeks of the decline, by making works more rich than beautiful. It is their glory to have had martyrs. When the painters, mutilated by the iconoclasts, fled into Italy, the West received with reverence the types they brought in their bleeding hands; and those images, consecrated by persecution and placed upon our altars, were naturally often reproduced. There was, besides, in those hieratic and severe lines a true grandeur which we may still admire, since the schism of Photius retains Byzantine art so long a time in an astonishing immobility. The East again influenced the West by the processes which it had preserved better, and which we were obliged to borrow from it.

But at last our emancipated art corrected the heavy masses of its architecture, lopped off the profusion of ornaments that hindered its flight, and succeeded, particularly in Germany and France, in producing new works, and the marvels we are beginning to understand, but are so far from equalling.

In the thirteenth century, Italian painting developed itself, and this is the most brilliant episode of Christian art. That great epoch owes its rise to one of those incidents which God makes fruitful, but the world does not perceive. Two men, whose birth-places were

very far distant, met, one day, in a church of Rome. One had come from Spain, the other arrived from Affisi. In this providential meeting, science and love recognized each other, and earth exulted at the kifs of S. Dominic and S. Francis. A long generation of artists sprang from it. The Dominicans and Franciscans, like brothers with but one same fortune and aim, travelled over the world, and diffused enthusiasm and genius. How resist the contact of their eloquence and of their voluntary poverty put on as the most touching form of love? Dante celebrated their triumph; and the great school of Giotto consecrated its most perfect works to S. Francis, whom it seemed to take as its patron, whilst the children of S. Dominic themselves produced marvels which Michael Angelo was never weary of admiring. Whether clothed in the religious habit or not, the artist then felt the influence of the two great Orders that regenerated and quickened human nature under Innocent III. Those waves of science and love overspread all Europe like a majestic river, and thence the nations drew copious inspirations. In Italy, Niccolo of Pisa, Fra Sisto, Fra Ristoro, Giotto, Orcagna, Taddeo Gaddi, Beato Angelico, Perugino, and so many others, whatever were their age and country, formed but one family united by the same faith, and praying at the same altars.¹

¹ The statutes of the Corporation of Painters of Sienna, in 1335, begin thus: —“By the grace of God, we are called to make known to rude men who cannot read, the miraculous things wrought by the virtue and in virtue of holy faith. Our faith consists principally in adoring and believing one Eternal God, a God of infinite power, immense wisdom, love and clemency without bounds; as we are persuaded that nothing, however little it may be, can have beginning or end without three things, that is to say, without power, knowledge and will, with love. (CANTU, *Histoire Universelle*, vol. xi, p. 593.)

In fine, when Raphael, the descendant and heir of those great men, came to assist in the battle of giants waged by Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo at Florence, it was in the Dominican convent of S. Mark still all trembling with the name of Savonarola, that he received from the hands of Fra Bartolomeo, with his last instructions, the destinies of art.

After having painted his great poems at the Vatican, Raphael went unhappily to inaugurate in the Farnesina the period of the Renaissance. This era has been thus called, because it saw the re-birth in the social state of that art which reason had impoverished and the gospel of Christ solemnly condemned.

Incapable by itself of reaching a public life, pagan art traitorously watched the material progress of Christian art, availed itself of everything which might serve it in seducing the senses, and, in short, made itself a party amongst those naturalistic painters, who sought the beauty of the creature rather than that of the Creator. In the name of the external perfection that established relations between the Greece of Pericles and the Italy of Leo X., pagan art reclaimed its empire; and genius, deceived by these false titles, fell into an ungrateful and fatal apostacy. The progress which art owed to Christianity ceased all at once, and the fall was as rapid as lightning punishing a blasphemy.

Art fell so quick and so low that, half a century later, the school of the Carracci was regarded as a resurrection, and its vulgar types passed for marvels. Bernini came afterwards, with his insolent fashion, to mix his works with those of Raphael, and Rome was incapable

of remarking the difference between them. How, in fact, can beauty be appreciated, when taste has been corrupted in the disturbance of the senses?

Pagan art, in the full sunshine of the gospel, was never to renew again its ancient glory. The passions, however, set up their statues again, and found adorers for them in the corruption of courts. There did the Renaissance prescribe its formula of laws. The code published by the erudition of the Medici and the money of the Florentine bankers rule us still. Since the sixteenth century, Christian art has undergone this unjust oppression; and they must make painful efforts who would restore its splendour.

The coarse doctrines of *art for art* and of *realism* seem to have prevailed. Pagan antiquity itself had recognized as necessary the alliance of natural and moral beauty;¹ but now-a-days public favour applauds their separation; and recompenses the prostitution of talent. Is it good or evil that art exhibits? Is it vice or virtue that speaks in our theatres and books? A sensual literature is set off like a courtesan, and comes to seat herself at the domestic hearth with her romances and fly-sheets. There she brings in sculpture and painting, which, by their nudities, insult our mothers' and our sisters' modesty. A venal and lying criticism weaves garlands which this corrupting art afterwards receives in academies and museums; and the moral sense is perverted by these fatal triumphs.

The Church, however, always preserves intact the treasures of Christian art; she possesses in their fulness the True, the Beautiful and the Good, and to all

¹ Vir bonus, dicendi peritus.

offers her holy traditions and sublime aspirations. Many, wearied with the debaucheries of pagan art, have returned towards her, and have found purer thoughts and sweeter enjoyments in the study of her monuments. They have understood that religion is the rule of moral beauty, and that without moral beauty natural beauty is corrupted in vice, and disappears in shame. Without religion, art is only a frivolous pastime and social danger. Religion alone can restore to it its original dignity and sublime mission.¹

With the desire of working for this fresh union of religion and art, we have written these pages. We have chosen in the past an artist whose example is a great lesson. Beato Angelico lived at the beginning of the fifteenth century, which separates the middle ages from the Renaissance. A faithful disciple of the tradition and last scion of the school of Giotto, he has not been surpassed in talent by any of the artists who prepared the reign of Leo X. He was a great painter and a great saint; and thus in his life and works reproduced the divine likeness, the eternal object of Christian art.

This model of artists we offer to the public. Although much praised, Beato Angelico is still but little known. We have availed ourselves of former works, and hope we have added to them some new facts; the chief, we think, is the separation of Beato Angelico's paintings from those of Fra Benedetto, his

¹ Instaurare omnia in Christo, quæ in cœlis, et quæ in terra sunt in ipso; in quo etiam et nos forte vocati sumus, prædestinati secundum propositum ejus qui operatur omnia secundum consilium voluntatis suæ, ut simus in laudem gloriæ ejus. (*Ephes.* i, 10.)

brother, the inferiority of which has dimmed his glory. We have also studied Beato Angelico in his relations with his contemporaries, and have done our utmost to find useful lessons in this study.

Have our efforts been fortunate? Our readers must be the judges. If we have fallen into some mistakes, let them reprove us for them as soon as possible; and if we have spoken some truths, let them aid us in thanking God for having inspired us with them.

Feast of the Purification,

February 2nd, 1857.



LIFE OF BEATO ANGELICO

DA FIESOLE.

CHAPTER I.

PAINTING IN ITALY BEFORE BEATO ANGELICO.



COUNTRY and age are the first elements of a man's life. Birth assigns us a point in space and time, and to their influence we are necessarily subjected. In our heavens, there is only one sun and one truth; but their rays are varied according to

the motion impressed on the world by the hand of God. Every country has its horizons, light, and fertility; every era, its civilization, belief, and events: and they make us what we are. Our body derives development of the senses from the earth which supports it; our soul is nourished by ideas surrounding it, and from them compounds its power. No one is isolated from his age, and none command it. Great men themselves are subject to this law; and when they

seem to be leading their contemporaries, they are only preceding them.

It is important, then, when we wish to understand the life of a man, to study his genesis, and learn what he has received from his age and country. The artist, more than any other, is the creature of these two circumstances, which alone explain the nature of his inspirations. So we will begin the life of Beato Angelico of Fiesole, by telling at what period of history God gave His well-beloved painter to Italy.

Art, like man, had to be born again of water and of blood. Baptism and martyrdom were the sources of his new being. Christ had reconquered the beauty lost by the original fall; and when the Tree of the Cross had borne its fruit, the breath of the Holy Ghost cast the divine seed of unity where Roman power had fixed the centre of the world. The germ of Christian art was buried in the catacombs with all the principles of civilization, and was there developed with the solemn slowness with which God sets about His work. Man hurries his, urged by the shortness of his life; but God, rich in His eternity, lavishes ages as He pleases, and clothes what He does with the majesty of time.

Archæology shows us this underground germination, which lasted until the reign of Constantine. Artists are born in the damp galleries which shelter the Christian mysteries, and there receive holy initiation by the chanting of the Psalms and the light of the torches. Moral beauty appears to them in all its brightness, on the faces of their brethren at prayer, and on the bleeding bodies sent to them by martyrdom. Their hands

trace touching words and symbolical figures on the stone and mortar which seal the tombs.

Soon are the vaults of the catacombs enriched with paintings and sculptures. Life protests against death, and the history of the past reassures the faithful against the trials of the present. Noe in the ark tells them to await the dove of safety; Job on his dunghill repeats his hopes; the children in the furnace sing their song of thanksgiving; Daniel prays peacefully amidst the lions; Jonas delivered from the waves of the sea reposes under the shadow of Providence; Jesus, the Good Shepherd, brings back the strayed sheep, heals the paralytic, and raises His friend Lazarus again, to remind His own that He is rich in power as in love. All nature is obedient to this new Orpheus. The earth, flowers, animals, the seasons of the year are represented in the catacombs, and everywhere the figures of the *orantes* raise their hands to God and offer Him the first-fruits of the regenerated world. What more affecting than these paintings, which speak to Christians of naught but happiness and victories amidst the tombs where their persecutors have buried them!¹

The paintings of the catacombs preserved the outward forms of ancient art; and Christianity gathered

¹ We cannot possibly admit the system of M. Raoul Rochette, on the origin of Christian types. The learned Academician thinks that Gnostic representations were their first models. (*Discours sur l'Art du Christianisme.*) Christian art never underwent the influence of that impure sect. The ideal of Christ was in the Gospel, and thence the faithful drew their inspirations. Even were the priority of the Gnostic monuments proved, no conclusion could be drawn from them favourable to the system of M. Raoul Rochette. Doctrine is the true origin of types; and an art never seeks its point of departure in a doctrine it detests.

them like withered leaves wherewith the winds of heaven cover the ground, in order to protect from winter the seeds to be developed in the spring. The universal mystery of life by death was slowly accomplished for Christian art. Painting in particular underwent a long preparation; it had been polluted in the debaucheries of idolatry, and God, before giving it back its power, purified it in the blood of the martyrs and the fire of iconoclasts. It issued forth radiant at last, and became one of the glories of the Church. After it had been consecrated beneath the arches of the Roman basilicas, it went, in the thirteenth century, to take possession of the privileged land which Providence had destined for it.

In the centre of Italy, along the Mediterranean shores, vast plains extend, sheltered from the northern winds by the chain of the Apennines. These mountains pour into them fertilizing streams, which bring out luxuriant vegetation in their course. The mineral wealth and fertility of the soil invite man to labour, and the clearness of the sky promises him long days to gather in the fruits of it. Thither a colony from the East went to fix their travelling-tents.¹ The Etruscans were a people of incredible activity: they gave to infant Rome its civilization, industry, and

¹ The learned are divided on the origin of the Etruscans. Some explain it by Hellenistic emigrations into Italy; others make it come more directly from the cradle of the human race. We cannot here discuss the particulars of the case, but will only say that Etruscan monuments show us an art quite distinct from that of the Greeks. Etruria certainly felt Grecian influence through its commerce and contact with Southern Italy; but its artistic forms have an indisputable originality. Asiatic inspiration is evident, especially in the style and figures of its tombs. (See *Manuel d'Archeologie* of Muller, § 169.)

monuments, and built upon the heights of the capitol the temple of Jupiter, wherein the destinies of the world were to be directed. Rivals rather than imitators of the Greeks, they stamped on their works an originality, admired by Athens in its greatest days; and when the old world disappeared, they carried off their masterpieces to their tombs, as if there to wait for the resurrection of art.

Etruria, in fact, has been to Christian civilization what Greece was to heathen antiquity. Athens and Florence were the capitals of the two nations rendered most famous in history by the fine arts. Those two cities chose virgins for their patronesses. The olive of Minerva decorated the pediment of the Parthenon at Athens, and the lily of Mary became the glorious device of Florence. Have not fable and truth here met together, to tell us that virginity is the sister of poetry, and purity the most faithful mirror of beauty?

The rise, progress, greatness and decline of an art amongst a people are explained by the relations of the art with the two fundamental laws of all society, authority and liberty. These two laws are to the moral world what the two forces are to the physical world they govern. Authority without liberty, produces immobility and sterility; liberty without authority, leads to isolation and anarchy; perfection springs only from the happy alliance of authority and liberty. Hence three distinct periods of art.

The first is the hieratic period. To say that art comes of the wants and caprices of man is to belie reason and history. If necessity is the mother of industry, religion alone is the mother of the fine arts.

The altar has always been a people's first artistic work. Architecture afterwards built temples, which sculpture and painting came to decorate; and from these sacred monuments man borrowed, later on, the luxury of his dwellings. Religious dogma is the authority in art; it gives formulæ to belief, regulates symbols, and creates the unity of intelligences without which the artist could not make himself understood.

If it remain under the exclusive direction of religious dogma, and liberty does not bring it the activity of life, art is left in the condition of writing, and is not developed, save in the narrow circle of material processes. Such is Egyptian art. It is with difficulty if the eye can distinguish slight differences in monuments separated by so many ages. Its statues remain bound under despotic rules, like mummies in their bandages; and this immobility cannot be overcome, either by the genius of the Greeks under the successors of Alexander, or by Roman power under the rule of Adrian. This servitude of art is almost universal throughout the East. Religions void of truth cannot suffer liberty to approach them; for liberty, by convicting them of error, slaughters them.

The second period of art is the learned period. In it man not only accepts belief, but his intellect studies and is at work upon it. His will is enamoured of it, and is not satisfied with simple forms unreflective of his thoughts; so he goes freely forth to seek in nature all the beauties with which he can clothe them. He requires from lines their pliancy and proportions; from colour, its variety and richness; from light, its gradations and harmonies; and rests not until he has

rendered his work worthy of the truth enlightening his soul. This balance between natural and moral beauty is the perfection of art. But man maintains himself with difficulty at this elevation. The natural beauty he has discovered exercises a powerful seduction over him, and draws him rapidly away into the third or naturalistic period of art.

The hieratic or religious element is forgotten, and art loses its greatness and dignity. Every one endeavours to imitate the beauties of nature, according to his own caprice, and the merit of a work is measured only by the pleasure the senses experience in it. Taste is vitiated by its minute diversities, talent is enfeebled by isolation, and soon nothing can stop the progress of decay.

These three periods are distinct in Greek art. The hieratic period precedes Pericles, the learned is personified in Phidias, and the naturalistic period begins with Alexander's conquests, and satisfies all the vices of the Cæsars.

In Italy, art has passed through the same periods. The first begins with the mosaics of Rome, and ends with Orcagna; the second is inaugurated by Ghiberti, and crowned by Raphael; the third dates from the Renaissance, and continues to this day. The painter whose life we are writing was providentially placed between the hieratic and learned periods, so as to be the summary of the one and model of the other. Let us see what his predecessors were, before we study the examples which his successors received from him.

The origin of painting in Italy remains in obscurity. The cities of Tuscany contend for the honour of its

cradle, as those of Greece did formerly for Homer. But their titles of artistic nobility prove nothing. The names escaped from oblivion have no relation with each other; and in them the historian cannot catch the unity which is the life of art in the great epochs. To begin with the sixteenth century, some local schools could be established, because herds of imitators were folded in some certain territory, there to continue the design, colouring, and manner of a master. But in the middle ages, artists of all countries formed but a single community of brethren, marching together in spite of frontiers and battles; pursuing through political revolutions their peaceful conquests; setting up their victorious tents at Sienna, Pisa, Florence, and S. Francis of Assisi's; and leaving masterpieces everywhere, which their successors admired and imitated. Ideas unite men; faith will do more for social union than all our railways; and against barbarism or the despotism of the fabre there is again no safety save in the standard of the crusades.

One of the historical errors most difficult to destroy, is that which ascribes Italian painting to Byzantine art. Every work before Cimabue (1240-1300) passes for a servile imitation of the masters of Constantinople; and Giotto is proclaimed the creator of a new and truly national art. Despite the great authorities supporting them, we cannot accept such assertions; for facts too formally contradict them. In the first half of the thirteenth century, a school of unquestionable originality existed in Italy. The paintings it has left us present genuine lines, which indicate life and announce progress; whilst the Greek paintings of the same epoch

offer nothing but symptoms of complete decline. The works of Giunta of Pisa, Guido of Sienna, and Duccio of Boninsegna, recall those of the ancient Etruscans, by the energy of the movements, the simplicity of the drapery, and the arrangement of the figures. The artists just named were the masters of those who honoured the succeeding centuries. Still, we do not deny the influence exercised by Byzantine art on Italy; but before explaining it, we must protest against the singular judgments and unjust contempt, of which that art is the object.

Byzantine art, yet so little known to us, received Christian unction at Rome, and consequently had, from the very beginning, the same symbol and hieratic element as Western art; and the archæologist, to explain the iconography of our old cathedrals, may profitably consult the painters of Mount Athos, who live like phantoms in the routine of ages. They who despise Byzantine art probably know it only by its works of the decline, hawked about by trade, and multiplied by bad copyists. Deeper studies will, one day, show that it was one of the glorious phases of Christian art, and that it alone imparted some grandeur to the fall of the empire.

People are particularly taken up with a dispute on the beauty of Christ, and imagine that the partizans of the *unbeautiful* came out victorious. This discussion was a quarrel of rhetoricians, and not of artists. The subtlety of the Greek mind upheld contradictory theses on certain texts of Scripture; but it will never be proved that the conclusion was hostile to the rules of taste and of good sense. The greatest Fathers of the

Eastern Church proclaimed the Saviour to be the most beautiful of the children of men; painters and sculptors believed them, and it was owing solely to inability if they did not realize the doctrine in their works. Their figures of Christ are perfectly conformed with those of the Virgin, angels and saints, whose beauty was not questioned; and if they had wished to introduce a systematic deformity, nothing would have been easier, as it sufficed to break symmetry. On the contrary, their types have a perfect regularity. We must judge them, not in the mournful scenes of the Passion, wherein the artists have often sought to express only suffering and expiation, but in the glory of triumph, in those Christs seated upon thrones, on the arches of the basilicas, where beauty is shown with a clearness which dispels prejudices against Byzantine art. And to them, again, may be opposed the numerous ivory carvings of Christ blessing the emperors. The one in the Museum of Antiquities at Paris bears the names and portraits of Romanus Diogenes and Eudoxia, his wife (1068-1072), and consequently dates from one of the saddest periods of history; but in delicacy of model, pliancy of drapery, and dignity of form, it surpasses all the works of art then executed in Europe.

Byzantine art is distinguished by a dignity of style and richness of accessories which recall the poetry and luxury of Oriental countries. Its misfortune is, to have inhaled the miasma of a corrupt civilization. The prodigalities of the emperors were more hurtful to it than their persecutions, and, when it had to fly before the followers of Mahomet, it arrived in Italy,

like a traveller who has passed over distant countries, and brings back to his native land some rare objects and the recitals of his mishaps, as the whole of his fortune.

The influence of Byzantine art on Italy had two causes. The war of the iconoclasts made those pictures holy which escaped from the fury of heresy. They were placed as relics on the altars, and the veneration of the faithful urged the frequent imitation of them. Afterwards people underwent the seduction which triumphs over national pride. Along with the treasures of the East, Venetian vessels brought artists, who were preferred to others, because they came from afar, and to them were entrusted the direction of the schools and the decoration of monuments.

The most celebrated pupil of the old masters was Cimabue. On his name principally is made to rest that affiliation of Italian painting which we cannot admit. We have already cited older artists, whose style is perfectly distinct from the Byzantine; and, if we study the works of Cimabue, we shall see that he was, so to speak, an exception amongst his contemporaries.

Towards the middle of the thirteenth century, the Florentine Republic had brought Greek artists to teach the fine arts; and, whilst watching them painting in the church of Santa Maria Novella, Cimabue had the revelation of his genius. A school had been opened in the convent of Friar-Preachers, and there the boy used to go and take lessons of his uncle, who taught grammar. His road was always through the church, and the painter's work made him frequently

forget the professor and his books. His copy-books were filled more with designs than with writing, and his parents giving up making him a scholar, entrusted him to the artists of Santa Maria Novella. The pupil far surpassed his masters. He understood their traditions, and discerned in them the last recollections of Phidias, which ages and barbarism had not effaced. Cimabue's merit is in the dignity of his figures and the majesty of his compositions. His superiority over the Greek artists will not be disputed, when we compare the paintings attributed to him in the church of Assisi with the Byzantine ones executed there at the same period. All those paintings certainly belong to the same school; but in his, Cimabue freed himself from the mechanical detail and the exaggeration of expression and movement which disfigure the work of the Greek artists. He makes an admirable effort to bring back all the details to unity, and all the profusion of ornaments and draperies to beauty. We will cite especially the "Benediction of Isaac," in which the patriarch is so majestically enthroned upon his bed; and the "Burial of Christ," the scholarly arrangement of which recalls the solemnity of ancient tragedy.

The reputation of Giotto has done much harm to the glory of Cimabue. Some believe that there is a great distance between the pupil and the master; yet they are separated only by the progress of a regular development. Giotto's merit is to have returned into the national path, from which Greek influence had caused Cimabue to deviate. He was the centre of all the great artistic movement which signalizes the beginning of the fourteenth century. History follows

him to Florence, Sienna, Pisa, Rome, Naples, Assisi, and Padua, and carefully records all the masterpieces and the pupils he left there. His chief qualities are, truth of movements, simplicity of expression, and poetry of bringing on the stage. The shepherd picked up upon a rock of the Apennines remains faithful to the inspirations of nature, as a child who forgets not the first lessons of its mother.

S. Francis is his hero, and the epopee he has traced of him on the walls of the church of Assisi became the favourite theme of his talent. The very novelty of the subject separates it from the routine of the Greek artists; and with difficulty fragments of some Byzantine types are met with here and there in his pictures. We will cite the Apparition of S. Francis during the preaching of S. Anthony of Padua, his mystical Marriage with Poverty, and the Glorification of the voluntary mendicant which dazzles the eye in the midst of the multitude of angels chanting and celebrating his triumph.

The picture by Giotto, in the Museum of the Louvre, is not to be despised. The scene of the stigmata is given with a great energy, and the charming gradino accompanying it has all the grace of the Franciscan legends.

Many of Giotto's contemporaries, who are often ranked in the number of his pupils, were only his fellow-labourers and friends. Pietro Cavellini, for instance, who was seventeen years older, remained faithful to the primitive style of the Italian school, and did not quit the old subjects, to which he knew how to give a deeply religious character. At the

same date, the two brothers, Ambrogio and Pietro Lorenzetti, produced works of remarkable originality. Without speaking of their paintings at Sienna and Florence, it is enough to examine the frescoes in the Campo Santo, in which they have represented the life of the Fathers of the Desert. All the poetry of these recitals, so genuine and so pure, is there given with a grace and dignity until then unknown. We feel that art is drawing new life in those pastoral scenes, and that there is a decided progress in those figures of hermits praying amidst the shade, or at work on the banks of their brooks.

The most illustrious rival of Giotto is Simon Memmi, only eight years younger than him. The difference of their talent and success is explained by their different sympathies. Dante was the friend of Giotto; Petrarch of Simon Memmi. The stern form of Beatrice seems to inspire the former; the sweet face of Laura served often as the model of the latter. Giotto made his masterpiece in the Franciscan church of Assisi; Simon Memmi painted his in the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella. The one is greater, the other more graceful; and, without being unjust, we can love Memmi most, whilst admiring Giotto more. It must not be supposed, however, that Simon Memmi lacked elevation. On the contrary, his frescoes in the Campo Santo of Pisa, and in the chapel of the Spaniards at Florence, present great character in style and remarkable dignity in composition. The legend of S. Ranier is especially distinguished for scientific groupings, variety of heads, elegance of draperies and richness of expression. These frescoes,

doubtless, were the most studied by succeeding masters. Simon Memmi died at Avignon in 1344.

Amongst the pupils of Giotto, Tadeo Gaddi was the most cherished by his master, and the most illustrious. By his pencil, art acquires more science and nobility. The energetic countryman has taken the usages of high society, and now wears the senatorial toga; but fortune has not corrupted him, and his fine drapery always covers a poetic and honest heart. The "Life of our Lady," painted by Gaddi, in Santa Croce, at Florence, may give a complete idea of his talent, by the grace of the figures, the dignity of the attire, and the skill of the composition. The little gradino in the Museum at Paris is not unworthy of his reputation. Some parts of it give presage to the epoch of Masaccio.

Tadeo Gaddi personifies the progress of the school of Giotto. He left its traditions especially to Giotto and Orcagna. Giotto appears to us with the sweet aureola wherewith posterity crowns talent surprised in youth and poverty by death. He was not thirty years old when he disappeared, being carried off by the profound sadness which the knowledge of an inaccessible perfection often causes in genius. His titles to glory are the frescoes in Santa Croce, representing the history of S. Silvester and Constantine; but one picture recommends him also to our admiration, and it is that charming composition in the church of Assisi in which he has given proof of most exquisite sensibility. S. Nicholas is miraculously restoring a young captive to her family who had invoked him. Nothing can be more pure and touching than the scene in

which the pious joy of the parents is shown by the truest expressions and most varied attitudes. We love even the little house-dog which comes under the table, to recognize and fawn upon its mistress.

Andrea Orcagna nobly closes the first period of art in Italy. Painter, architect, and sculptor, he transferred into his works the poetry of Dante, of whom he was the passionate admirer. His "Triumph of Death" and "Last Judgment" are worth the finest pages of the Divine Comedy : there is the same energy of thought and dignity of style. Orcagna has been often compared with Michael Angelo ; but if we compare the paintings of the Sistine Chapel with those of the Campo Santo, we shall see that the latter are sublime, and the former gigantic. Michael Angelo is extraordinary, whilst Orcagna is religious. Their compositions are summed up in the two Christs pronouncing judgment. The one is an executioner striking with a thunderbolt, the other a King, who condemns whilst he shows the sacred wound of his side to justify his sentence.

The sculptures attributed to Orcagna closely resemble his paintings. The "Presentation in the Temple" and "Burial of the B. Virgin," in San Michele, at Florence, call to mind the severe style and energetic expression so particularly admired in his "Triumph of Death."

Those who have studied the history of art too often neglect to observe the influences sculpture and painting exercise upon each other. Sculpture is the first-born sister of painting, because she offers the simplest and most natural means of imitating external forms.

The material the models reproduces the reality of them, whilst painting only simulates it by lines, foreshortenings, shades and colours. Painting, consequently, has more difficulties to overcome, and these difficulties require more science, time and research. The priority of sculpture in antiquity is indisputable; in the middle ages, it is less evident, because in the slow preparation Christian art underwent, sculpture and painting took an almost parallel course; but in the thirteenth century, the dates are positive. Neither to the Greek artists, nor to Cimabue, or to Giotto, must the real Italian renaissance be attributed, but to the school of sculpture that appeared at Pisa. It freed painting from the fetters of routine, and imparted to it freedom of movement and activity of life, by teaching it to study truth of form, delicacy of model, pliancy of drapery and happy combination of lines.¹

Niccolo of Pisa preceded Cimabue. They say he received lessons from the Greek sculptors who were at work on the cathedral of the city; but he only learned the processes from them. His real masters were the ancient bas-reliefs he studied; and if we had no contemporary evidence to prove it, it would be enough for us to cite the sculptures of San Giovanni, in which the imitation of heathen subjects is flagrant.

¹ In his life of Niccolo of Pisa, Vasari proves the happy influence of sculpture on art in Italy. "At this epoch (1240)," says he, "many artists, moved by a praiseworthy emulation, applied themselves to sculpture with greater zeal than they had hitherto done. At Milan, all the Lombards and Germans who worked at the cathedral, and were dispersed when the war broke out between the Milanese and the Emperor Frederic, strove together, and began to produce some good results. The same progress was remarked at Florence, as soon as Niccolo and Arnolfo exhibited their first works."

We find there again, amongst others, the copy of a modest Venus, and the group of the bearded Bacchus visiting Icarus.¹ The composition of his bas-reliefs also recalls that of the ancient sarcophagi, by the arrangement and great number of their personages. Still it must not be supposed that Niccolo of Pisa was an artist without originality; in his works, the Christian thought rules the imitation. The sculptures on the tomb of S. Dominic, at Bologna, present new subjects of remarkable composition; but his masterpiece, in our opinion, is the pulpit of the cathedral of Sienna, in which the figures adorning it demonstrate a school superior to any preceding or contemporary schools. The simultaneous study of the antique and of nature opens a new career to art.

The progress of Italian sculpture is particularly visible in Andrea of Pisa, the pupil of Niccolo, and contemporary with Giotto. Andrea of Pisa, who probably came in contact with French artists, is distinguished by the purity of lines and simplicity of composition which architectural bas-relief demands. His gates made for the Baptistry of Florence remind us of the Greek works of the great epoch. Ghiberti continued what Andrea of Pisa had begun, but he surpassed him only in the richness of details and elegance of proportions, and injured sculpture by leading it astray into the domain of painting.

The name of Ghiberti is a date in the history of Italian painting. We have quoted him as the head of the learned period. A pupil of the Pisans and an

¹ Cicognara, *Storia della Scultura*, (Pl, xv.)

inheritor of their passion for ancient monuments, he inaugurated his talent by a signal triumph. The Republic of Florence had invited all artists to a great competition, promising an impartial judgment and noble rewards. Ghiberti's competitors were Jacobo della Quercia, Niccolo d'Arezzo, Simone da Colle, Francesco di Valdambrina, Filippo Brunelleschi, and Donatello, who had not yet reached his eighteenth year. The judges at once set the works of Ghiberti, Brunelleschi and Donatello above the mark. But the last two did not wait for the final decision, and had the glory of crowning the conqueror themselves. Ghiberti was at work for twenty years on the gates of the Baptistry of Florence, which Michael Angelo thought worthy to be the gates of heaven. His influence over his contemporaries was immense; and the school formed around him, which is summed up in the two names of Maffolino and Mafaccio, led art into a direction, the advantages and dangers of which we shall have to study.

Art had now arrived at the fulness of life, which brings on, both for man and nations, the conflict between good and evil. Until then, the Church had guided its infancy, and had taught it to praise God and give thanks to Him. Its only business, in the beautiful words of Buffalmaco, was to represent the faintly men and women in Paradise, in order to make men better.¹ But when the hour of manhood came, natural beauty presented itself with all its seductions,

¹ Non attendiamo mai ad altro, che a far santi e sante per le mura et per le tavole, ed a far perciò con dispetto de' demoni gli uomini più divoti o migliori. (VASARI, *Vita di Buonamico Buffalmaco*.)

and it was necessary to choose between vice and virtue. God and matter had each their partizans, who formed two camps opposed, like the two cities of which S. Augustine speaks. Beato Angelico was providentially born, with Ghiberti, at the beginning of the struggle. Their birth-places were nigh each other, and death led them, the same year, into the presence of God (1455).



CHAPTER II.

BIRTH OF BEATO ANGELICO.—HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE ORDER OF S. DOMINIC (1387-1408).



BEATO ANGELICO received the light of day in 1387, at Vicchio, one of the fine fortified villages which crown the summit of the Apennines, in the province of Mugello. A century before, Cimabue had picked up, on a neighbouring hill, the child who was to give so great an impulse to Italian painting. Vespignano, Giotto's native place, is but a few miles distant from the place which saw the birth of him whose history we are about to study.

Beato Angelico's early years are unknown; we only know that he was then called Guido or Guidolino, that his father bore the name of Pietro, and that he had a brother, whom we find associated with his sanctity and masterpieces. This passage of Vasari is the most valuable information about his childhood: "Although he might have lived in the world with

the greatest ease, and, besides what he possessed, have earned all he desired by the arts he knew so well even in his boyhood, yet being naturally steady and good, he resolved to become a religious of the Order of Friar-Preachers, for his own satisfaction and quiet, and principally to save his soul.”¹

Thus Beato Angelico did not offer to God a heart withered by lassitude, or scared by want. He came to present freely at the altar, youth all adorned with the joys of fortune and promises of renown. When we have long walked in the paths of the world and suffered its trials, we often turn to our past years and see how much happier they would have been had we given them entirely to God; but to know the truth before these tardy lessons of experience, and to perceive it with a prophetic glance athwart the illusions of youth and its expected crowns, needs a supernatural light and special favour from on high. And even when we do thus know the reality of things, we frequently stifle the aspirations of a holy ambition, because our heart is weak against the recollections of our childhood and our mother's tears. To the goodness of God calling us to a higher life, we oppose the very gifts He has bestowed upon us.

We do not know what Beato Angelico gave up to gain the precious pearl of the Gospel; but with a soul loving and amiable like his, he must have renounced the charm of many an affection, and doubt-

¹ Costui sebbene avrebbe potuto comodissimamente stare al secolo, ed oltre quello che aveva, guadagnarsi ciò che avesse voluto con quell' arti che ancor giovinetto benissimo far sapeva, volle nondimeno per sua soddisfazione e quiete, essendo di natura posato e buono, e per salvare l'anima sua principalmente, farsi religioso dell' ordine de' frati Predicatori. (*Vita di Fra Giovanni da Fiesole.*)

less to assuage his regrets, Providence willed his elder brother to follow him to the altar.¹

The spiritual family Beato Angelico chose, was the Order of S. Dominic. The aim of this Order is the apostolate, that is to say, truth known by science and manifested by love: and as beauty is the natural form of truth, all who follow the star of the holy founder are eminently artists, since they spread abroad the Divine truth, the only object of art.

Art has many means of action. Speech is the first, and the most efficacious and direct. Truth springs from the heart of man and escapes from his lips, full of life and heat. It communicates itself to and imposes itself on the intellect and subjugates the will. The orator assimilates his audience to himself, and leads them where he will; but his victorious word is fleeting, and would be lost in time as in space, if art had no other resources to make its conquests firm. Not only does writing fix the word, but painting, sculpture and architecture multiply and eternalize its wonders. All the affirmations and sentiments the discourse contained, are set fast by lines and colours, and man's action thus perpetuated may reach the remotest generations.

It was natural, then, that the Order of S. Dominic should not neglect any means of making the truth known. To build churches and adorn them with paintings and sculpture, was the complement of its

¹ We cannot follow the opinion of P. Marchese, in thinking that Fra Benedetto was younger than his brother Beato Angelico. The testimony of Vafari is explicit. The name of Fra Benedetto must have followed Beato Angelico's on the register of profession, if he had entered the convent after him.

apostolate. Thus from the beginning, whilst the most learned European universities of Paris and Bologna were listening with admiration to the eloquence of the Friar-Preachers, Florence, the Athens of the middle ages, entrusted the glory of its monuments to the talent of the Dominicans of Santa Maria Novella.

The establishment of S. Dominic's Order in Italy has a very remarkable character. The Friar-Preachers always arrived in the great towns as ambassadors of peace, and enemies reconciled together gave them churches and convents in token of their gratitude.

The thirteenth century was bloody on account of the struggle between the Guelphs and Ghibelines. In a high point of view, this was a war between Christian and pagan principles, and of the liberty of the Church against imperial despotism; and Providence, for the welfare of modern nations, brought out the profound distinction between the spiritual and the temporal power. But when we come to the details of the war, what a variety of episodes, what confusion of interests, and what outbursts of private passion! Venice, Milan, Sienna, Pisa, and Florence, especially, become arenas where the parties wrest bloody victories in turns. The names of Guelph and Ghibeline are only the rallying cry of hostile races. Sometimes rival lords are aiming at power, sometimes the people are defending against feudal ambition the immunities granted to them by the Church. Error, whose only expedient against truth is always violence, takes advantage of this universal turmoil to enlist its soldiers. The Manichean heresy preaches the theories which appear in every social revolution; and religion, rising to confound

them, is once more honoured with the martyr's palm. S. Pietro of Verona writes his victorious *Credo* with his blood.

His death was not the only glory of the Friar-Preachers. S. Dominic sent his disciples to the devastated towns of Tuscany, with words of peace and love. The little band arrived at the town towards evening, lodged in some hospital, and in the morning, after offering prayers to God and consolations to man, went down to the public square, to fulfil the object of the journey. Not by skilful arbitration did the Dominicans triumph, but by speaking of the love of Jesus crucified, and of the peace He gives to men of good-will. The most exasperated enemies listened weeping, to things which hatred had made them forget ; their weapons fell, and they took each other by the hand, to accompany the good religious, who led them into some neighbouring church, to give fraternal thanks to Heaven.

Twelve Friar-Preachers thus arrived at Florence, about 1219, under the guidance of Beato Giovanni of Salerno. That same year, S. Dominic, on his return from Sienna, found them in the hospital of S. Maria Maddalena, where they remained till 1221. The small church of Santa Maria della Vigna was then given them as a recompense for their services ; but it could not hold those whom their eloquence and virtues attracted. When S. Pietro of Verona was sent by Pope Innocent IV. to combat the Manichees, he had to preach in the open air in a neighbouring square ; and as room was still wanting, the Republic of Florence ordered the demolition of as many houses

as the crowd of hearers would require, as truth appeared to be the principal necessity of the people.¹

The Dominican colony soon made rapid progress. The usefulness of a religious order always produces alms to support and devotion to multiply. Those whom the Friar-Preachers had snatched from hatred gave themselves up to love, and the grateful city lavished its treasures and its youth on its pacificators. The year 1279 witnessed a festival destined to be one of the most glorious dates in Christian art. P. Latino Malabranca, Cardinal legate of the Holy See, after he had appeased the troubles of Bologna and reconciled the Guelphs and Ghibelines of the Romagna, went to Florence to conclude a solemn peace between the parties. He convened the people on the ancient square of Santa Maria Novella, the whole of which was decorated with suits of tapestry and with galleries wherein were ranged bishops, prelates, clergy, religious, authorities, the captain and councillors of Florence. The Cardinal made a discourse worthy of the occasion and of his eloquence. Then he gave the signal for a general embrace between the representatives of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, who numbered one hundred and fifty on each side, and peace was concluded amidst the joyous acclamations of all the citizens.²

In testimony of this great act, the first stone of the new church of the Friar-Preachers was laid and blessed. Like the people of God on entering the

¹ The decree of the Republic, dated Dec. 12th, 1244, is found in P. G. Richa, *Notizie storiche delle Chiese Fiorentine*.

² GIO. VILLANI, *Cronica*, lib. vii, cap. 6.

Promised Land, the Florentines wished to pile up stones to perpetuate the memory of their deliverance, and those stones became a masterpiece.

Santa Maria Novella is the purest ray of the artistic glory of Florence. The magnificence of Santa Croce and Santa Maria dei Fiori, which were built some years later, have not eclipsed it;¹ and Michael Angelo, who could not weary in admiring it, gave it the sweet name of *Sposa*. This fair bride was presented to the genius of Italy by Fra Sisto and Fra Ristoro, two poor Dominican religious. Some have wished to associate these two architects with the great school of Pisa, but it is most probable that they studied chiefly under James of Germany, who built the church and convent of Assisi, and executed great works for the Republic of Florence. This connection would explain the relations of their work with the wonders of French architecture: in it, we find the same elegance and poetry; it is the same art and inspiration under a different sky and with other materials. The erection of that church offers a peculiarity not to be passed over in silence. Not only were the two architects Dominicans, but the convent furnished masons and carpenters as well. This temple, raised by pure and consecrated hands, amidst recollection and prayer, was thus, more than any other, the symbol of the spiritual Church built by the saints on the plan of Christ, and to be consecrated by the last judgment to everlasting joy.

The two religious, whose genius Rome and Florence

¹ Arnolfo laid the foundations of Santa Maria dei Fiori in 1294, and those of Santa Croce in 1298.

had admired, seem to have fallen asleep in the peace of a holy obscurity. In 1283, the ashes of Fra Ristoro disappeared beneath an unknown slab in Santa Maria Novella; and six years later, the nuns of the solitary convent of San Sisto at Rome were praying around the lifeless remains of Fra Sisto, who in his latter days had become their humble servant. History, however, has not forgotten them in its pages.¹ But their highest praise is in the posterity of artists they left to complete their work. The names of Fra Mazzetto, Fra Borgheze, Fra Mazzanti, Fra Giovanni da Campi, and Fra Jacobo Talenti, are identified with the finest monuments, the pride of Italy. The Dominican school of architecture, which built Santa Maria Novella at Florence, SS. Giovanni e Paolo at Venice, San Niccolo at Treviso, Santa Maria sopra Minerva at Rome, and San Domenico at Naples, is distinctively characterized by a simplicity full of nobleness and grandeur, and recalls the style of the reign of S. Louis, the traditions of which it might easily have received through the convents of S. Jacques and of Toulouse.

The Order of Friar-Preachers also furnished its share to the celebrated school of sculpture, which unquestionably caused the progress of painting in Italy. One of the best pupils of Niccolo of Pisa was Fra Guglielmo Agnelli, whom his master wished to associate in all his most beautiful works. He entrusted to him the execution of part of the bas-reliefs on the tomb of S. Dominic at Bologna; and the chronicle

¹ VASARI, *Vita di Gaddo Gaddi*. BALDINUCCI, *Vita di Arnolfo*. CICOGNARA, *Storia della scultura*. P. V. MARCHESE, *Memorie dei più insigni pittori, scultori, e architetti Domenicani*, lib. i, c. 2.

of the convent of S. Catterina tells us how this good religious paid himself for the masterpieces his filial hand had wrought for the glory of the holy founder. During the translation of the sacred relics, he stole a rib, and hid it under the altar of his convent. All his life, he enjoyed his treasure in secret; but at his death, he owned his pious theft, and bewailed it as a great fault. Fra Guglielmo executed important works in his own country, and worked on the bas-reliefs of the façade of the cathedral of Orvieto, falsely attributed to his master. This magnificent church, where later on we meet again with Beato Angelico, was begun in 1290, when Niccolò of Piza was reposing in the tomb.

Our painter's most direct predecessors in the Order of S. Dominic, were the miniaturists, whose naive compositions embellished monastic manuscripts, and prepared for Christian art its iconography and doctrine. From the beginning, the Dominicans rivalled the Benedictines and Camaldolese, who have produced so many remarkable artists. The chronicles of their convents, in touching notices dedicated to the memory of their departed brethren, make constant mention of good painters and writers of ability: Fra Pietro Macci (1301), Fra Caro Belloci (1316), Fra Tommaso (1336), Fra Matteo Marconaldi (1348). In 1348, also died of the plague at Florence, Fra Guido, the supposed author of the choir-books preserved in the noviciate of Santa Maria Novella. There also, are admired two large psalters painted by Padre Michele Sertini della Casa, who died in 1416, and no doubt, knew Beato Angelico in his youth. Our painter's vocation was probably

influenced by this friendship ; but it seems also that the principal honour of it must accrue to Beato Giovanni Dominici, founder of the convent of Fiesole.

This religious, of such great energy and activity of life, loved and cultivated painting. In the convents he established or reformed, he recommended the study of it "as a powerful means of elevating the soul and developing the holy thoughts of the heart." There are a great number of his letters addressed to the Dominicans of the convent of Corpus Domini at Venice. He gives them advice on the method of executing miniatures, and offers himself to finish what they could not do.¹ From the moment he met him, he must have understood and longed for the young man, whose soul was so pure and talent so precocious. Beato Angelico, on his part, became an easy conquest, because nothing has greater sympathy for strength than meekness. God makes the meek masters of the earth, and puts honeycombs into the mouth of the lion.

The convent where Beato Angelico presented himself, stands on the declivity of the mountain of Fiesole, one of the most beautiful of those surrounding Florence. Boccaccio, whose sensual pen was purified later on by penance, has not found a more enchanting spot for telling his profane stories.³ He took pleasure in describing its verdure, shades and limpid waters, its peaceful valleys and rich horizons. But it was not these that most charmed the soul in the convent of Fiesole. All its beauty, like that of the spouse in the

¹ *Commentario della vita del B. Giovanni Bacchini*, vol. in fol. MS. Arch. di S. Marco, V. § xxx. P. V. MARCHESE, l. v, p. 181.

² *Decameron*, vi giourn, 10 nov.

Canticles, was from within; reform had there established its rule.

The reform of a religious order is a great miracle of Divine grace. At every instant, God is drawing from His power new germs of life; but how few He brings back from death! He created the world by a word, but what heroic means has He not chosen to save the world from the ruin of sin! If the conversion of one soul is an event that gladdens all the angels, what a festival must there not be celebrated in heaven, when a religious order which relaxation was extinguishing returns to its first fervour!

When God would save the people He had settled in the Promised Land, He chose a man to restore their courage and their victory. The man of God of the Dominicans, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, was Beato Giovanni Dominici. Abuses had been introduced into the Order in the train of the two great scourges, by which Italy had been desolated during the preceding century. The plague had cut down the holiest and most devout;¹ and the schism which the Church was still experiencing cast the survivors into uncertainty as to their course. Beato Giovanni Dominici combated the evil with zeal. He chose generous assistants from the convents, and thus formed new houses, which brought back the primitive rule in vigour. In 1400, he established himself at Fiesole, with fourteen religious taken for the most part from the reformed convent of Cortona; and in the follow-

¹ In 1348, the convent of Santa Maria Novella lost seventy-seven religious in the space of four months.

ing year, the two brothers of Mugello went to increase this little Dominican family.

When a man leaves the world to enter the cloister, he receives a new name which symbolizes his new life. Religious profession is regarded as a second baptism. Our painter was called Fra Giovanni, and his brother Fra Benedetto. The name of John was more suitable than any other, since "S. John, the apostle, evangelist and prophet, was, of all the friends of Christ, the one who penetrated farthest into the mysteries of beauty and of Divine love, the eternal objects of the true artist's contemplation."¹ Posterity, however, has forgotten that name for two others merited by his life and works. Fra Giovanni is now sometimes called *Fra Angelico*, the *Angelic Brother*, and by his more devoted admirers *il Beato*, the *Blessed*, Angelico. This last name we give him in our history, because it best expresses the purity of his talent, and the character of his sanctity.²

The first days of religious life have a charm which the world cannot understand. God clothes the beginnings of everything with a particular beauty and sweetness. In it, He is intimately present, in order to receive its first fruits, of which He declares Himself jealous. The noviciate of a cloister is the dawn, the spring-tide and infancy of a higher existence; and its peace, delights, joys and hopes, none can tell.

¹ R. P. LACORDAIRE, *Règlement de la confrérie de Saint-Jean-l'Évangéliste*.

² Some authors call Beato Angelico *Fiesole*; but this is a wrong appellation. If we would designate our painter, in the Italian mode, by his native place, we should have to say *Mugellano*, or *Fiesolano*, as we say *Perugiano*, or *Parmesano*; but Fiesole is only the name of a place.

There God shows Himself like a mother towards her son who has to undertake a long and painful journey: she presses him more tenderly than ever to her heart, and lavishes caresses on him, the remembrance of which will sweeten his fatigues and console him in his absence. When we study the works of Beato Angelico, it is natural to go back to the epoch which prepared them, and was their source. But we find that fountain sealed and that garden shut, the purity and abundance of which only angels know. We may judge the cause, then, from the effect, and believe the flower as beautiful as the fruit has been delicious.

Another means of appreciating Beato Angelico's early years, is by knowing the religious who were his friends at that time. First of all, was Beato Giovanni Dominici, of whom we have already spoken. God made him to be born of poor parents, and let him earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, till he was eighteen years of age. When he asked for the habit of S. Dominic, the religious of Santa Maria Novella were on the point of refusing a young man, whose exterior and education gave so slight hope; but from his noviciate, his progress in letters and virtue was such, that his superiors took him for a model and a master. During his protracted vigils, he made so good use of his rare intellect and prodigious memory, that he rapidly overcame the difficulties of theology, philosophy, mathematics and canon law. The success of his preaching caused him to be compared with S. Vincent Ferrer, who was exercising his miraculous apostolate at the same time. Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Venice and Rome were reformed at his word; and

with religion and morality, peace for the people and happiness for families everywhere reappeared. His biographer remarks that, notwithstanding the vigour with which he pursued vice, his charity taught him the secret of never wounding the feelings of any one. Those who wished to hinder him from preaching, on account of the crowds he converted and withdrew from the world, could not resist the pleasure of hearing and applauding him. The work he had most at heart, was the reform of his Order, and success crowned his efforts to such a degree, that the rule was soon flourishing again throughout all Italy. After he had founded the convent of Fiesole, God called His servant to greater things, and made him His chief instrument in putting an end to the schism which had so long desolated the Church.

The other companions of Beato Angelico were Beato Marco of Venice, his prior; Beato Lorenzo of Ripafratta, his novice-master; Beato Pietro Capucci, who, when fifteen years of age, forgot the nobility of his family for that of Jesus Christ, by begging in the streets and serving in the hospitals; Beato Costanzo of Fabriana, whose ardent charity obtained everything from God and man, and Beato Antonio Neyrot, who so gloriously redeemed his fall by voluntary martyrdom. Pirates had made him prisoner and carried him to Tunis. After having at first generously confessed his faith amidst torments, he let himself be overcome by pain, and was weak as S. Peter had been at the voice of a servant maid. But a merciful look from his Divine Master touched his heart also, and he resolved to take a great revenge. He purified

himself by tears and prayer, and exercised himself for the combat by bloody penances; and then, being clothed again with the strength of Christ and the habit of his Order, he went before the judges, to accuse himself of his guilt and to preach the Gospel. Five days of threats, promises and torments, could not break him, and he died, kneeling, with arms up-raised to heaven, buried under a shower of stones.

Beato Angelico's most esteemed friend was S. Antoninus, younger than him in years but older in the cloister. At thirteen, he went to offer himself to Beato Giovanni Dominici, who, seeing his diminutive stature and delicate constitution, promised, with a smile, to receive him when he thoroughly knew canon law. The boy took the answer in earnest, and returned, some time after, when he had learned by heart the voluminous treatises of that difficult science. This act of courage and memory opened the convent doors to him. His learning and virtues soon raised him to the greatest charges, in which he was distinguished as much by his parts as by his deep humility. All their lives, Beato Angelico and his brother Fra Benedetto were united with S. Antoninus by the ties of a lively friendship. Our painter pointed him out for the see of Florence, when it was himself whom the Pope wished to raise to that high dignity. S. Antoninus made as many efforts to avoid honours as people generally do to obtain them; but he found no refuge from the Divine will, and had to become the model of bishops as he had been of religious. He made no change, on that account, in his mode of living, but retained his habit, rule and laborious and mortified life; banished

every luxury from his house, and corrected abuses with energy and mildness. He was eminently the apostle of peace and father of the poor, and at the age of seventy years died in the joy of his Lord, pronouncing these beautiful words, "To serve God is to reign."

To speak of these saints is no digression from our subject. Virtue in a convent is like light in nature; it is reflected on everything, and from the rays crossed and blending together, results a general harmony in which nothing is isolated. The merit of each belongs to all, because all really have but one heart and one soul in God.



CHAPTER III.

BEATO ANGELICO'S RESIDENCE AT FOLIGNO AND CORTONA.—HIS ARTISTIC STUDIES (1408-1418).



HE peace of the convent of Fiesole was of no long duration. God often takes the tempest as the minister of His will. Events are like the winds He commands to purify the air, fertilize plants, and carry their rich feeds to a distance.

In the confusion of the storm, we see nothing but ruins and tears; but afterwards, when the sun of history shines, it is perceived that the ruins were those of error, and the tears a dew fertile for good and truth. The troubles which agitated Italy removed Beato Angelico from his sweet retreat; and we shall see that this was a blessing for his talent and for Christian art.

The bark of Peter was then in peril, and Christ slept the sleep that tries faith. The Church, wounded in the centre of life, seemed to be losing unity; she deeply felt those ambitious struggles which destroy

empires. The residence of the Popes in the county of Avignon had clearly proved the necessity of their political independence, and S. Catherine of Sienna, the Joan d'Arc of catholicity, had received the mission to bring Gregory IX. back to Rome, the predestined city. The Sovereign Pontiff has the whole earth for his country, but the place whence he must bless it will ever be the tomb of the Apostles.

The Cardinals who nominated Urban VI. maintained that the election had not been free, and made a new one under the pressure of their passion and private interests. Robert of Geneva took the name of Clement VII., and went to rule at Avignon under the patronage of France. Then began the schism of the West which had such deplorable results. The world was divided, and the struggle in the Church became more fatal to civilization than the most bloody wars. Excommunications, or favours still more dangerous, were the weapons of the combat. The desire of creating partizans led to an indulgence which destroyed discipline, and to nominations which kept up anarchy even in the smallest localities. Cities had two bishops, convents two superiors; and troubled consciences no longer perceived the visible order established by God on earth to convey even to the weakest the infallibility of His doctrine and the strength of His sacraments. In this disordered hierarchy, each chose, not a guide for his soul but a protector for his affairs, or an accomplice for his covetousness. This state of things would have been the destruction of the Church, had she not possessed the eternal promises.

When Pope Innocent VII., successor of Urban VI. and Boniface IX., died at Rome, the Republic of Florence deputed Beato Giovanni Dominici to the cardinals of the conclave to engage them to suspend the election, in order that the extinction of the schism might be rendered easier; but when he arrived, Pope Gregory XII. had been opposed to Peter de Luna, who kept his see at Avignon, under the name of Benedict XIII. The illustrious Dominican exerted the influence which his virtues and enlightenment gave him over the Sovereign Pontiff, to determine him on renouncing the tiara, in case his competitor, on his side, would renounce *his* pretensions. The negotiations undertaken in this matter led to the Council of Pisa, which increased instead of resolving the difficulties; for the two adversaries found, in their mutual conduct, reasons for not keeping their word; and their colleges being again met together, after deposing them, nominated Alexander V. in their stead. Instead of two Popes there were now three.

Beato Giovanni Dominici remained, as the ambassador of peace, with Gregory XII., and the sequel justified his sympathies and conduct. The Council of Constance, which terminated the schism, was successful through the obedient and voluntary abdication of Gregory XII.; whilst John XXIII., successor of Alexander V., yielded only to force, and Peter de Luna died in his criminal obstinacy.

Meanwhile, the Republic of Florence had declared itself for Alexander V. On the contrary, the religious of Fiesole, being faithful to the direction of their founder, remained firm to Gregory XII.; and as it

was fought to make them change fides by violence, they protected their liberty by flight. The town they chose for their asylum was Foligno. God led them, for a particular end, to that part of Italy, as it was there He would prepare Beato Angelico for his fair destinies.

The Florentine school from which He separated him, was then in a new phase of its development. It was abandoning by degrees its hieratic types, and seeking in its compositions rather the perfection of form than the manifestation of the religious thought. The mind, diverted from the true aim of art, reflected the beauties of earth, to the detriment of the beauties of heaven. Ghiberti studied antiquity, in order to steal from it the nobility of its figures and the elegance of its proportions.

Paolo Ucello had a strong passion for perspective, and chose subjects which could best exhibit its illusions. Exactness in anatomical details, the truth of likeness, the difficulties of foreshortening, precision of movements, and harmonious combination of lines, were the single prepossession of the artists who already preferred the admiration of connoisseurs to the pious sympathy of the crowd. Painting became more learned, but also less Christian.

Beato Angelico, already separated from the world by the cloister, was removed, too, from Florence, the neighbourhood of which might trouble the purity of his talent, and went to grow up under another sky, like those dear children who are sent far from the turmoil of the city, to be nurtured in a purer air and by a more tranquil breast.

The influence of locality plays a great part in the life of man ; especially it makes a difference between one people and another. God made the human race to flow into the world from a single source, but He has prepared various channels for its waves. Nations are rivers which vary with their banks. Some precipitate their noisy course through wild rocks, others roll their waters over the quiet sand. Country makes our existence : every day it gives its reports, its lights and imagery to feed our senses ; from it come the forms of our thought and the reminiscences of our heart ; there every joy finds its mark, each event its place. We imbibe it at every pore, of it make up our whole being, and when absence separates us from it, we understand to what degree it is our element. This union of man with what surrounds him, is a law of the Creator. God has made us the souls of the world and dispersed us over the whole earth, in order that every mountain, valley and shore may have a voice, a prayer.

Italy is, perhaps, the most varied country of the globe, and this will be one of the obstacles to the unity she dreams of, under the shadow of her ancient glory. The mountains trace out separations there, which it will be difficult to destroy. The traveller is astonished at changing his scenery so frequently, and at meeting so many different beauties within so small a space. There are the rich plains of Piedmont, of which Germany is jealous ; the bright coasts of Genoa, which make us forget those of France and Spain ; the majestic solitude of the Roman Campagna ; the wild aspects of the Abruzzi ; the intoxicating sky of Naples ;

the volcanic lands of Sicily, with their ruins mysterious as those of Egypt; and the shores of the Adriatic, once crowded with ships from the East in the great days of wealthy Venice.

In the centre of these countries is Umbria, which sums up the whole of them. More uneven than Lombardy and the Romagna, fresher than Tuscany, sweeter than the environs of Naples, it leaves the dearest memories in one who has gone over it. How can one forget the light so pure, the atmosphere so transparent, the lakes reflecting mornings so fresh and evenings so calm; the mountains topped with towns for diadems; the hills all wreathed with beautiful ravines, brought out, rare shapes, against the cloudless sky; the valleys, torrents, roads, where the vine-garlands lend to the elms their rich fruit and graceful foliage? No! never has artist-visited that country without experiencing its happy influence. There the school of Perugino copied its chaste landscapes, and Milton found verse to paint his Paradise.¹

Spots so beautiful could not fail to have a history; antiquity and the middle ages have left traces of their passage. There Rome and Carthage disputed the empire of the world; and when feudality had built its castles on the ruins heaped up by the barbarians, Umbria became the lists where chivalry unfurled its banners. Those were not the wars of now-a-days, begun in the darkneses of diplomacy and ended in the calculations of strategy; but Homeric combats mingled with discourses and festivals, tourneys held

¹ Milton visited Italy, and sojourned a long time at the Abbey of Vallombrosa. He was particularly inspired in his description by the banks of the Arno.

on the plain, and gazed upon from the neighbouring heights by towns destined for the conqueror.

God also chose those places as the theatre of one of his fairest victories. Those who had been to the East to recover the sepulchre of Christ had very quickly forgotten the aim of their holy enterprise. Mahometanism, vanquished by arms, triumphed by its customs; and the Crusaders, being compelled to strike their tents, brought vices back to Europe which endangered Christian civilization. In order to save it, God instituted that chivalry of poverty of which S. Francis was the grand master. None felt the folly of the Cross more deeply than that young man of Assisi. He overcame the world by contempt for riches, and formed legions of apostles who traversed the earth, teaching by word and example the passion for sacrifice. The plains of Umbria saw the beauty of the tents of Jacob, and the Church exulted at the sight of its wondrous fruitfulness.¹ The life of S. Francis was like a great shout of victory re-echoed in the neighbouring valleys and mountains. S. Clare of Assisi repeated it first, then Rose of Viterbo, Angela of Foligno, Agnes of Montepulciano, Catherine of Sienna, and Margaret of Cortona, all of whom celebrated the divine nuptials of love and poverty.

When the new Crucified had gone to rest upon the hill of Assisi, his tomb, like Christ's, became glorious; for God made grace and pardon stream from it. The church by which it was covered was the dawn of a new architecture, and successive painters, from

¹ At the second General Chapter, held May 26th, 1219, more than five thousand disciples of S. Francis encamped on the plains of Assisi, around the Portiuncula.

Cimabue to Perugino, decorated it with their sweetest inspirations. Under what purer sky and into what holier place could Providence lead Beato Angelico for developing his talent?

History does not tell us who was Beato Angelico's first master. Some authors mention Gherard Starnino (1354-1403), and give him Masolino da Panicale (1378-1415) for his fellow-pupil; but this opinion has no other foundation than a certain similitude of style. It is, besides, a matter of little importance to clear up. The master is a great deal to mediocrity, but very little to the genius taught directly by nature and the past. It is evident that Beato Angelico formed himself outside the artistic movement of Florence. Miniature was his first occupation and real school. He grew up alone, like one of those vigorous saplings rising from the very root of the tree to renew it.

It is a mistake to separate miniature from historical painting; the image is like the thought it represents, independent of its dimensions. God and man can manifest the beautiful in little and in great things. The cedar and its vast shades are in the seed which is carried by the wind; but to fulfil the mysteries of its life, and prepare its magnificence, the seed requires a good and undisturbed soil: the art of miniature found this in the cloister.

We have already quite corrected the strange judgment formerly passed on convents, and it is now almost a commonplace to say that religious life has been the holy ark in which the Church has renewed human nature. In going back to the source of all the progress our age boasts of, we always arrive at the cloister

and monks, who serve us as links with antiquity; they are the unwearied workmen who have civilized barbarians, cleared forests, taught sciences, created universities, developed industry, and built the marvellous monuments which we are beginning to understand. But whatever be the share assigned them in those masterpieces of the middle ages, we shall do them only justice in recognizing what they have done in giving it a scientific formula.

Science is truth known by the intelligence, and art is truth expressed by love. As truth needs to be known before it is expressed, between art and truth there is always science, and this science is the measure of the art it inspires. The science of art does not consist, as seems now-a-days believed, in certain external laws and processes. Geometry and stones are only the means for the architect. Science is a tongue which names things and arranges them together. To discover science is the great work of man. Hollowing out a furrow and laying in it the grain which is to multiply and feed, is nothing; a little toil and sun are enough, and the crop comes. But to penetrate the nature of things; to know their elements, properties and relations; to arrive by analysis at synthesis; to discover, in short, unity, the plan of the Creator, is a work that wears out generations and ages. What researches, what vigils, what chances, what mistakes, before reaching certainty! A single affirmative acquired is sufficient to make a life illustrious; and after so much time and efforts what have we? Some materials ranged in a certain order, but the edifice has yet to be built.

Art receives its science from a religion. Religions are developed in the world by three degrees. They are first imposed by faith; men accept a revelation, a tradition, and recognize its authority. They are afterwards extended by science, which explains the relation of the visible and invisible, of the cause and effect. Finally, they are communicated by signs and images always necessary for our nature, and only when they have translated their doctrines by outward forms, do they attain their full empire. To refuse the language of art to a religion, is to dry up its source for the majority of mankind.

This assimilation of artistic forms to doctrine is very remarkable in the religions of antiquity. Their theologies being based only on the confused traditions of a primitive revelation, created, in order to express the relations of the Supreme Being with the universe, a vast system of symbols calculated to render the explanations of them palpable to the people. But the sages kept the key, and gave it up only in the secret of the initiations. Thus the people stopped at the form and fell into idolatry.

The religious form of the Greeks was the most favourable one to the development of art, because to give the invisible they took the most perfect visible being. Instead of creating, like the Orientals, fantastical figures as symbols of their belief, they chose man whom God Himself had made to His own image, and their genius strove to express in his person their ideas of the First Cause. Not only did they invent types representing the higher powers of nature, but they also composed histories to recount their phenomena.

That vast assemblage of allegories became a language, with which artists could express everything. The figures and scenes on their monuments had a sense known to the people, and that social language was the life of art and favoured its development. We are beginning to decipher heathen iconography, despite the obscurity the Romans brought into it by mixing together all the religions of the nations they conquered. When shall we also revive Christian iconography, so useful and so admirable !

The middle ages had an iconography, an artistic science, as superior to heathen iconography as light is to shade. Instead of fictions, Christians have realities for images. God has really become incarnate, and Christ, in putting on the human form, has become the type of beauty and virtue. All that is admirable in the universe is a reflection of His light ; and all that is sublime in the heart of man is a ray of His grace. His thoughts make saints, His words make worlds. He is the centre of time and space, the meeting-point of the present and the future, the master of events, the argument of history, the tie of the Old and New Testaments, the source of the Church, the purity of virgins, the strength of martyrs. This primal and fruitful beauty, religion presents to Christian art. What science did it not require to comprehend and reproduce it ! This science the Fathers of the Church prepared in their commentaries on the Holy Scriptures ; but they who gave it system and merit to be called the fathers of Christian art, are the patient and unknown monks who were turning the text of manuscripts into pious images, and creating

a sign and symbol for each bright thought and each affection of the heart. By them, the most elevated truths and the most useful lessons of religion were brought within the reach of all. Christian art became a book wherein the most ignorant could read, an universal mirror wherein history and nature were delineated in their moral forms—a mirror dimmed by our ignorance, but still serviceable, if study restores to us its brightness and its images.

There artists will find again the science, the language, which gives power over the multitude. What is art without iconography? Mere isolated acts, individual reveries, a relation between the initiated few. But with iconography, with signs and symbols comprehensible to every one, art becomes a social power, and a means of subduing minds and hearts, of carrying them on to virtue and uniting them in love.

Let painters and sculptors study miniature, who have the holy ambition to renew the wonders of Christian art. The figures stocking our cathedrals are often unexplained; they will be found again in manuscripts beside the text. Manuscripts are a mine still unopened, we may say, by archæology. What riches, what pious and genuine beauties! Every page has its joys and tears, as each day its light and dew; there are flowers and fruits for every season. And they were poor monks who have thus identified the life of art with the life of the Church, in praying to God by images, and having no other ambition but to excite a holy thought in the heart of their brethren! Sometimes the Father of the family gave them a higher place at His banquet; their task was increased, and

they painted their masterpieces on the walls of churches and cloisters. Fame paid them a visit, and forced them to appear on a wider stage: princes and cities invited them to decorate their monuments, and to associate them with the most celebrated artists.¹

Such was the destiny of Beato Angelico. Miniature was his first school. He studied the holy truths of religion in those beautiful manuscripts, in which the text is translated and commentated by the pencil. But he was not satisfied with that teaching, and, like the Christian orator, who becomes the disciple of the holy fathers like them to clothe doctrine with the charms of eloquence, profoundly studied the great masters, and appropriated their works so well, as to become the most illustrious representative of the great school of Giotto. He did not go astray in search of originality, as is done in our own days. Now the most indifferent painter thinks to redeem his want of talent by novelty of composition, whilst the greatest artists of Greece and of the middle ages were not afraid to follow the track of their predecessors, and to exercise themselves on models already consecrated. Christian compositions belong to every one; they are like the prayers adopted by the Church, which each one repeats indifferently, according to his degree of faith and the rapture of his heart. Beato Angelico dedicated to the study of the great masters his years of exile passed under the fair sky of Umbria. His pictures prove it better than historical documents. The

¹ Dom Bartolomeo della Gatta, a Camaldolese religious, arrived at great historical painting through miniature. He was charged, with Luca Signorelli and Perugino, to paint the Sistine Chapel.

earliest especially show the influence of the school of Giotto, and in them are found types and figures borrowed from the paintings at Assisi.

Assisi was to Christian art what the universities of Paris and Bologna were to science in the middle ages. Great artists came successively to deposit their noblest inspirations at the tomb of S. Francis; and when the walls of his sanctuary were entirely adorned with these *ex-votos* of genius, other churches were opened to receive them, and all the sacred edifices of the city were beautified with paintings, which new generations of artists fought to make worthy of the masterpieces they came to admire. Despite the ravages of time and men, Assisi is still the most interesting and complete Christian museum for the student of tradition. Foligno and Perugia are only a few hours' distance from it, and Beato Angelico, who long dwelt in those two towns, must have very often made a pilgrimage so sweet to the artist and the Christian. He travelled through that beautiful valley studded with sanctuaries; visited the church of Santa Maria dei Angeli, consecrated by so many recollections, and the convent of S. Damiano, so faithful to its virgin poverty; knelt at the tombs of S. Clare and S. Francis, and received in the Sagro Convento the fraternal hospitality never refused, during so many ages, to the children of S. Dominic. Thus he found again the masters he had loved at Florence. He studied the magnificent Crucifixion by Pietro Cavallini, still so remarkable notwithstanding mutilations, for its beauty of colouring and energy of expression; the Life of the Virgin, by Taddeo Gaddi; the Chapel of the Blessed Sacra-

ment, by Giotto; the History of S. Mary Magdalen, by Buffalmacco; and the great poem in four cantos, with which Giotto crowned the altar over the body of S. Francis. But the painter who perhaps most engaged his sympathies was Simone Memmi, in the admirable chapel where the History of S. Martin is represented. These paintings have recalled to our mind more than any others the character and grace of his talent.

To us, it is beyond doubt that Beato Angelico studied the old paintings of Sienna: from them he mostly borrowed the type of his Madonnas with looks so pure and sweet.¹ Sienna is not far from Florence: Beato Angelico often passed it on his journeys, and probably went there to assist at the annual festivals celebrated by his Order in honour of S. Catherine, before her canonization.² He must have known Andrea Vanni, the disciple of that great saint, the portrait of whom he has left us; as well as Taddeo di Bartolo, who, in 1409, was painting the beautiful Annunciation preserved in the public gallery of the city.³ If Beato Angelico found masters and friends at Sienna, there too he had disciples and imitators; for later on we shall see Giovanni di Paolo inspired by his compositions, and borrowing whole figures from his Last

¹ We will cite particularly the fine Madonna by Guido of Sienna, at the foot of which the painter has written these verses:—

ME GHVIDO DE SENIS DIEBUS DEPINXIT AMENIS,
QUEM Xps LENIS NVLLIS VELIT AGERE PENIS. ANNO D. MCCXXI.

The church of S. Domenico at Sienna.—ROSINI, *Storia della Pittura*, plate iv.

² *Vie de S. Catherine de Sienne*, part ii., chap. II. See the process of Venice, DOM MARTENE, *Veterum Scriptorum et Monumentorum amplissima Collectio*, tom. vi, p. 1238.

³ *Catalogue*, third room, No. 1.

Judgments. No school has greater conformity with the talent of Beato Angelico than the school of Sienna.

To the study of the old masters, Beato Angelico added that of nature, and thereby surpassed preceding painters. He certainly did not use a model, as the artists of the Renaissance did. He had no ambition for the science of the nude; and on the rare occasions when he painted the human body, it would be easy to mark down faults in anatomy. Was he thinking of avoiding them, when, on bended knees and with tearful eyes, he was painting his Christs? But if he neglected a talent more advantageous to the senses and to the artistic vanity than to piety and the glory of God, he did his utmost to give the beauties of nature truthfully. His movements are exact, his proportions happy, and he condenses on his figures a life and an expression which imagination alone could not have yielded. In place of mercenary models, whose indifference stifles inspiration, he found in the religious surrounding him friends, to whom he could communicate his thoughts and feelings. This explains the life-like expression of his saints, who seem to be painted from nature. It is evident, also, that Beato Angelico's poetic soul took pleasure in studying the riches with which the Creator has decked the earth. In his first pictures particularly we find flowers copied with all the joyousness and patience of love, and his compositions sometimes present landscapes, which for freshness and truth would do honour to the ablest Flemish painters.

Beato Angelico must have had cartoons well filled with studies. He carefully prepared his pictures, and preserved the drawings of them; for we find the same

figures in works executed at very remote places and periods. His drawings are numerous at Florence, but we have few of them in France. The Museum of Sketches at the Louvre has one, and M. de Reiset two in his valuable collection.¹ That in the Louvre is the oldest, and might be a study made during his years passed in Umbria. It is executed on coloured paper, set off in white. It represents a S. Francis in a glory: its bad preservation is to be regretted. At the back of this drawing, is the face of a little stag, charmingly graceful and natural. M. de Reiset's drawings are more important. The first (No. 5 in the catalogue) presents studies for a composition of the Last Judgment; they are done with the pen and in bistre, with great freedom. Christ as Judge, and the three angels accompanying him, recall the picture in the Corfini gallery. At the top, is a hand drawn from life, and given with the precision and liveliness admired in the hands of Holbein's portraits. On the reverse of the sheet, on a yellow ground, is a fine head of a religious seen in front, half in the light and half in shade; and this portrait presents a surprising character of truth. The smallest details are represented in it with the fidelity of daguerreotype; a little swelling over the left eye is given carefully. A painter of the Renaissance could not have drawn it with greater breadth and skill.

The second drawing of M. de Reiset (No. 6 in the catalogue) is also double. It contains two studies of

¹ We were not able to study the drawings at Florence, as they were not exhibited in the Gallery of the Uffizi at the period of our last journey. We here thank M. de Reiset for his kindness in allowing us to enjoy the treasures in his possession, which he is so well qualified to appreciate.

the evangelists S. Mark and S. Matthew, painted on the arch of the chapel in the Vatican. The former is washed and set off in white on a green ground; he holds with both hands a book opened on his right knee. The latter has a pen in his right hand, and a closed book in his left: it is with the pen, and washed with bistre on white ground. These two studies are very beautiful and well finished, and make us understand how our painter prepared and executed his works.

Thus Beato Angelico neglected no means of cultivating and developing his talent. He studied tradition and nature. Manuscripts taught him to clothe his faith with images and symbols all could understand. The old masters taught him the great principles of art, and he imitated their masterpieces, as the descendant of a noble race imitates the exploits of his ancestors, by following their virtues without aping their actions. Beato Angelico did the same in regard to his predecessors, by appropriating their good qualities, without servilely copying their pictures. He sought progress, and found it in the study of nature. He studied her not through vanity and to surpass others, but through love for the Creator, and to glorify them in the beauty of His works.



CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST WORKS OF BEATO ANGELICO (1408-1418).



HE works of Beato Angelico are very numerous, but our blessed painter counted time and glory as nothing, and never signed nor dated them. Still we will endeavour to classify them, by the aid of history, and as the different phases of his talent point out to us. His pictures do not present the changes of style undergone by other artists through external influences. The love of God, being his only inspiration, diffused over them unity and perfect harmony; but that very harmony has delicate tints, even as the heart has different tones, according to its years, whilst repeating the self-same prayers and canticles.

The life of Beato Angelico is divided into a certain number of epochs, in which it will be easy for us to arrange all his pictures. The hills of the neighbourhood

of Florence had seen his artistic and religious childhood. His youth expanded under the fair sky of Umbria, amidst the archaic works of Christian painting. The ten years between his departure from Fiesole and his return were not entirely spent in studying the old masters, and he consecrated, no doubt, a great part of the time to making pictures.

The religious, whose voluntary exile he had shared, remained four years in the convent of S. Domenico, at Foligno. But the plague, afflicting Umbria about 1413, caused some relaxation in it, and they quitted it, fearing more the scourge menacing their souls than one which might attack their bodies. They withdrew to the convent of Cortona, the cradle of Beato Giovanni Dominici's reform, and noviciate of most of them. Beato Angelico went with them; but he staid, doubtless, at Perugia also, and perhaps then executed the picture in the convent of his Order. This painting and those at Cortona seem to us to belong necessarily to this period. He probably made many others now lost or hidden in the obscurity of cloisters, there to delight some holy souls. The paintings at Perugia and Cortona were done under the influence of the school of Giotto, and they superabound in the naturalness of heart and freshness of imagination, which a youth nurtured by pious meditations can alone possess.

The picture executed for the chapel of San Niccolo dei Guidalotti is now in the chapel of S. Orsola, in the church of S. Domenico, at Perugia. It must originally have been oblong, and divided, like triptichs, into three compartments terminated in angles, and with a

gradino.¹ It represents, on a gold ground, the Holy Virgin and her Divine Son. On both sides of the throne, angels are carrying baskets of flowers, whence the child Jesus seems to have taken the rose he is holding in his hand. The expression of the Son and the smile of the Mother seem to say that this rose is the emblem of the Mystical Rose which God has chosen, amongst the fairest and purest creatures, to descend there and put on our humanity. In the two compartments serving as shutters for this picture, Beato Angelico has painted S. John the Baptist, S. Catherine, S. Dominic, and S. Nicholas.

The gradino is also divided into three pictures, representing the legend of S. Nicholas. The first two are at Rome, in the Museum of the Vatican. The third has remained at Perugia, and is in the sacristy of the convent of S. Domenico. The first picture comprises three subjects.

1. The birth of S. Nicholas. His mother is put to bed, and a female washes the child, who is standing.² His little body is well drawn.

2. The young Nicholas hearing a sermon. His delight was to frequent churches; and he retained all he heard out of the sacred scriptures.³ A bishop is in the pulpit; and his audience are women seated upon a flowery turf.

3. After the death of his parents, S. Nicholas em-

¹ Padre Marchese thinks with Padre Bottonio, that this picture was executed in 1437, but its form and style make us believe it to be older.

² Hic prima die, dum balnearetur, erectus stetit in pelvi (*Legenda aurea, de vita S. Nicolai*).

³ Factus autem juvenis, aliorum devitans lascivias, ecclesiarum potius terebat limina, et quidquid ibi de sacra Scriptura intelligere poterat, memoriter retinebat.

ploys his riches in good works. The daughters of a gentleman are in danger of losing their virtue, on account of their poverty. S. Nicholas saves them from dishonour, by throwing a considerable sum through the window, in the night-time. The subject is expressed with great simplicity of composition. The interior of the young girls' bed-chamber is seen, and the father, in the foreground, is sitting to watch his benefactor.

In the second picture, S. Nicholas, become Bishop of Myra, is having unladen from a vessel bound for Rome, a hundred measures of corn, to feed the city desolated by famine. By a miraculous multiplication, the freight of the vessel is not diminished, and the hundred measures suffice the poor for two years. In the mid-distance, behind the rocks, the saint appears to people who are invoking him, and calms the tempest threatening their ship.

The third picture, still at Perugia, contains two subjects. The first shows S. Nicholas saving three Roman princes from the death by which an unjust governor would have them perish. The second represents the obsequies of the holy bishop. He is extended on his bier, surrounded by religious, by women and the poor, whose tears tell his virtues and charity. In the upper part, angels conduct his soul to heaven, and with their harmony celebrate his triumph.¹

The Madonna of S. Domenico, at Perugia, had some little pictures for a frame, now separated and shown in the sacristy. There are twelve figures painted with extraordinary delicacy. Two pictures representing the

¹ *Cœlestium melodia audita est.*

Annunciation formed, probably, part of the top of the composition. By Mariotti, all these paintings at Perugia have been ascribed to Gentile à Fabriano; but the mistake is evident, for the style of that master is too different from Beato Angelico's to let us confound them. Besides, the same compositions have been repeated by our painter; and we have, on our side, the authority of Rosini and of Padre Marchese.¹

The convent of Cortona, where Beato Angelico passed the last years of his exile, stands on the Cyclopiian walls of the town, and commands one of the most magnificent landscapes in Italy. Beyond the wild declivities of the foreground, the view is extended over a rich plain bordered by mountains, and over the beautiful lake of Perugia, which reflects like a mirror the clear light of Umbria. The poetical soul of

¹ V. MARCHESE, lib. ii, c. 4, p. 217.

[“On a gold ground he (Beato Angelico) painted the Blessed Virgin, seated on a throne, with the Divine Babe on her knees. Two Angels stand at either side, with baskets of flowers, from which the infant seems to have taken a rose that he holds in his right hand. At the foot of the throne are some shrubs, with white and red roses; a beautiful idea, that the painter repeated afterwards in Cortona and elsewhere. The Virgin, rejoicing in her maternity, smiles on her Son; and this portrait appears to us to be the noblest and sweetest of the many he has executed. Its grand characteristics, like those of all his other paintings of the Madonna, are purity and grace, so well befitting the Mother of the Son of God. I think, however, that the design of the nude in the infant, as well as angels, is feeble. Retouchings, or, perhaps, the injuries of time, prevent us from recognizing the drapery of the Virgin's robe. In the two lateral compartments, now divided, there were four figures, two on the right, and two on the left; these were S. John Baptist, S. Catherine, Virgin and Martyr, S. Dominic and S. Nicholas, all in one line, according to the Giottesque; and, if we except the second of these figures, all the others are most beautiful and excellently executed. But truly beautiful was the gradino of this picture, on which he painted three histories of the life of S. Nicholas, of which only one remains, the other two having been removed to the Vatican. This, that may still be seen in the church of S. Domenico (Perugia), over the great door of the sacristy, is divided into two compartments; in one of

our painter must lovingly have enjoyed that fine spectacle, which recalled the grand scenery of Fiesole. On the façade of the church of S. Domenico, at Cortona, he executed, probably his first painting in fresco. He has represented, on the tympan of the door, a Madonna, with the child Jesus holding a globe. S. Dominic and S. Peter Martyr are in adoration before their throne. This painting is damaged in the lower part. The four Evangelists adorning the arch are better preserved, and allow of our admiring now the simplicity of execution, delicacy of touch, and purity of colouring, which are natural qualities in Beato Angelico.

In the interior of the church, the beautiful architecture of which has been unfortunately modified, are seen, on the left of the high altar, the shrine of Beato

which he represents the holy bishop, and two youths, who, with bandaged eyes, are in the act of waiting the headman's stroke; multitudes, assembled to witness the execution, seem to shudder and groan; and the sudden appearance of the Saint stays the axe of the executioner, and saves them. In the other he painted the funeral of the Saint, whom he represents stretched on the bier, and surrounded by the poor, by monks and women, who exhibit signs of the deepest grief. But that which is still more exquisite is the action of the two youthful acolytes, one of whom raises the hem of his surplice to wipe away the tears which he could not refrain. In the upper part of the same compartment he painted the soul of the Saint conducted to heaven by angels. Amongst the works of the Angelico, executed in the miniature style, this appears to me to be truly beautiful, the little figures being exquisitely designed and coloured. The cornice [frame] that adorned this picture, (now divided into twelve pieces, each having a little figure,) may be seen near the same door of the sacristy; but, although they possess great merit, no one that has seen his Deposition from the Cross in Florence, will pronounce them to be his best performances. To complete the entire picture, we want the points of the upper part; and, probably, the two little pictures in the same sacristy formed a part of them. These represent the Annunciation and the angel Gabriel, on a gold ground. They appear to me to have been executed by the same painter, but I would not dare to affirm it."—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, p. 177.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

Capucci, and on the right, a picture by our painter. The remembrance of these two contemporaries over the altars, before which they had prayed together, struck us, and we confess that the work of Beato Angelico seemed to us a holy relic, like the bones of his friend : for is it not a living remnant of himself, a ray of his soul, a perfume from his heart ? This picture strongly recalls the one at Perugia, by its arrangement and principal subject ; only the dimensions are larger and the execution is superior. Its form is ogival. In the centre, is seated the Virgin, one of the most beautiful by the painter. The child Jesus, standing on her knees, is covered in the lower part with a red drapery ; he holds a rose in his hand, and is looking at his mother with a delightful smile. Around the throne, four angels, whose heads are ravishing. On the two shutters, on the right S. John the Baptist and the well-beloved Apostle, on the left S. Mary Magdalen and S. Mark. The upper part of the triptich represents, in the principal angle, Christ on the Cross, and at his feet the Virgin and S. John the Evangelist, the Mother and the adopted son. In the exterior angles, the two figures of the Annunciation.

The gradino of this picture is now in the church of the Gesu at Cortona, which serves as a baptistry for the cathedral. It is a little poem in honour of S. Dominic. His history is represented in six compartments. The first presents two subjects, the Dream of Pope Innocent III, who sees in his sleep S. Dominic supporting the tottering Church ; and the inexpressible embrace of S. Dominic and S. Francis, which was

the signal for the conquest of the world by science and love.

The second compartment represents S. Dominic in ecstasy before the altar. The Apostles S. Peter and S. Paul appear to him, and give him the book of the Gospels and the traveller's staff, symbols of his divine mission. A young religious pausing on the threshold of the oratory, happily contemplates this scene.

In the third picture, S. Dominic disputes with the Albigenses, and proposes to them to try their opposite doctrines by fire. The flames consume the writings of the heretics, and, on the contrary, respect the book of S. Dominic.

In the fourth picture, the holy patriarch raises the young Napoleon to life, and gives him back to his mother. This composition recalls the bas-relief of Niccolo of Pisa on the tomb of S. Dominic, at Bologna. Our painter appears to have been several times inspired by the sculptures of that monument, which filial piety doubtless led him to visit.

The next picture makes us present at the repast where S. Dominic and his brethren receive miraculous bread from two angels. The last painting presents the blessed death of the Holy Founder. The religious surround him, weeping, and kiss his hands, whilst angels carry his soul into the bosom of God. We do not stop at these compositions, because we shall have to examine them more attentively in another gradino. Four charming figures separate these pictures into pairs. The first is S. Peter Martyr, from whose head and breast escapes the generous blood with which he wrote, expiring, the first words of the creed; the

second, S. Michael the Archangel, remarkable for its purity and dignity; the third, S. Vincent, deacon and martyr, with the mill-stone which was tied to his body when he was thrown into the sea, that the faithful might be deprived of his holy relics;¹ and the last is an admirable S. Thomas Aquinas.²

Beato Angelico painted for the church of his own convent a second picture, now at the Gesù. It represents the Annunciation, a subject he was so fond of repeating. It was his *Ave Maria*, that prayer every Christian loves so much, because it recalls the words whereby Mary was made mother of God and men. "When she heard it, for the first time, from the lips of Gabriel, she immediately conceived within her

¹ S. Vincent is represented, with his mill-stone and the raven which defended his body, on the fine south door of Chartres cathedral.

² ["In six compartments he painted eight histories of the life of the Saint (Dominic); and, from time to time, by way of episodes to that epic, he introduced some graceful little figures of saints, which, far from violating the unity of the subject, tend to heighten the beauty and perfection of the entire composition. First, there is S. Peter, Martyr, the wound in whose head and breast tells how generously he laid down his life for the faith; then comes the compartment in which he executed two histories—the first is the vision of Pope Honorius [read Innocent] III., who, after having refused to sanction the new Order, dreamt that he saw the Lateran Basilica falling, and S. Dominic sustaining it; the second is, S. Dominic meeting S. Francis of Assisi, who, recognizing each other by Divine revelation, kneel and embrace. The second compartment, like the first, is divided into two parts, one of which represents the poor cell, and the other the oratory of the saint. The perspective in both is admirable. In the oratory we see S. Dominic before the altar, in ecstasy receiving the gospels and staff from Saints Peter and Paul, who send him forth to evangelize peoples and nations. One of the most charming figures in this composition is that of a friar, who, setting out on his mission in obedience to the command of his superior, pauses on the threshold of the cell to steal a glance at this wonderful apparition. Next comes a beautiful little figure of S. Michael the Archangel, light, airy, and full of grace. In the third compartment there are also two histories; in the first, he represents S. Dominic disputing with the Albigensis; and in the second the ordeal of fire, in which he depicts the astonishment of the Saint's adversaries, on seeing their book

most pure womb the Word of God; and now every time the mouth of man repeats to her those words, the signal of her maternity, her heart thrills with joy at the recollection of a moment which never had its like in heaven nor on earth, and all eternity is filled with her happiness."¹

The Annunciation at Cortona reminds us particularly of the old masters. The Virgin is on a throne covered with rich drapery, and her arms are crossed upon her breast. An angel² with golden hair advances towards her, and his hands show the text of S. Luke, "*Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te, et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi:*" "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall over-

burn and his unscathed. In the picture of the Saint resuscitating the young Napoleone at Rome, he faithfully carried out the idea of Niccola Pisano, and placed the afflicted mother near the dead body, imploring the Saint to call back her son to life. Then follows the figure of a martyr, beautifully painted. I am ignorant, however, of the subject. By the dalmatic we know that he is a holy deacon, and that the heavy weight suspended from his neck describes the mode of his death. He produced only one history in the compartment that follows; and here he represents the Holy Founder seated at table with his brethren, and the angels bringing them food. In the last he painted the death of the holy patriarch; and this, in my judgment, excels all the others. The holy soul has been already borne into the bosom of the Eternal by angels; his bereaved children surround the lifeless body; some of them kiss his hands, others raise their arms to heaven; some of them, almost petrified by grief, fix their eyes on his beloved features; whilst others, unable to restrain their tears, raise their garments to their eyes. This is a work calculated to awaken piety in every heart. The actual gradino has a most graceful figure of S. Thomas of Aquino. All these histories are beautifully designed and coloured, and are most simple in their compositions."—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, p. 182.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

¹ *Vie de Saint Dominique*, par le R. P. Lacordaire, p. 332.

² ["In the wings of this angel there is a profusion of gold and colouring unexamined in the other pictures of the same; nor does the drapery of this figure deserve so much praise as that which we find in the generality of Fra Giovanni's works. Here, indeed, it is too much elaborated and confused."—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, p. 184.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

shadow thee." The Virgin answers, "*Ecce ancilla Domini*:" "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." This use of inscriptions on the field of a picture is regarded by many as a custom of barbarous times; it existed, however, in the most glorious epochs of Greek art, but will always shock those who seek to address the senses rather than the soul, and place all the perfection of painting in the knowing combinations of lines and colours.

The scene takes place under a small portico with graceful little pillars. In a landscape vista, is seen an angel driving Adam and Eve out of the terrestrial paradise, who are clothed in the dress God made for them. Bringing these two subjects together was very frequent in the middle ages, because it explained the cause and manner of our redemption. Our mother by nature ruined us by gathering the forbidden fruit; our mother by grace has saved us by accepting the redeeming fruit. She it is who, according to the promise, crushes the tempter-serpent's head.

The gradino of this picture is also at the Gesù. It represents the history of the Holy Virgin, and is divided into seven compartments, with these subjects.

1. The Nativity of the Virgin. S. Anne herself consigns the infant to a midwife. This picture is damaged.

2. The Marriage of the Virgin and S. Joseph. The scene takes place at a city-gate; the high priest is uniting the espoused. This picture is very remarkable as a work of art. S. Joseph, particularly, is in a beautiful style. The women accompanying the Virgin

are draped and grouped perfectly. The men placed before S. Joseph express their joy by dance and song.

3. The Visitation. The Virgin and S. Elizabeth reverentially embrace each other. Two women only are present at the interview between the blessed mothers. One contemplates it from the threshold of the house, the other, kneeling in the road, raises her arms to heaven and gives thanks for this joyful mystery. The landscape is one of the most remarkable by our painter, who was inspired by the pure and peaceful spots of Umbria.

4. The Adoration of the Magi. This composition is one of rapturous simplicity. S. Joseph is speaking with the oldest of the three Magian kings, and affectionately presses hands.

5. The Purification. The aged Simeon clasps the Infant to his heart. The Virgin stretches out her hands to him. Behind her, S. Joseph is carrying two little doves; on the other side, the prophets Anna is devoutly advancing.

6. The Burial of the Virgin, as the Golden Legend so poetically relates it.

7. The Virgin gives the habit of the Friar-Preachers to the Blessed Reginald.¹ The artist has thus bound up the history of the Virgin with that of his Order, of which she is the patroness. Marchese thinks this picture did not form part of the gradino; but it evidently does belong to it. It is narrower than those before it, and of the same size as the first, of which it formed the pendant. Three of these charming little

¹ *Vie de S. Dominique*, p. 443.

pictures, the second, fourth, and sixth are found also in the gallery of the Uffizi, at Florence.

We feel how incomplete are the indications we are giving of the earliest works of Beato Angelico. To describe a picture is always difficult, because words ill express what the pencil represents. As for other artists, however, there is a means of making the result of their inspiration understood, and criticism may analyze the peculiar qualities of their talent; but Beato Angelico is not a painter only, he is also a saint. How tell celestial music, which earthly instruments could not yield? An engraving or even a copy leaves much to wish for. The pictures of our saint must be seen, and seeing them, we feel that we should understand them better, were we ourselves better. They are like those pages of the Gospel, which proportion the intensity of their light to the purity of the heart.

Our purpose is to inspire artists to love and study the works of Beato Angelico. Shall we gain it? Will not our efforts be fruitless? Many pass before these pious pictures with indifference, and if they stop for an instant, fascinated by a mysterious attraction, they soon shake off the secret call of virtue, and go away saying, "It is mystic painting." Yes, but what is mystic painting? And why cannot every one do it, nor even understand it?

There is a mystic painting, because there is a mystic life and a mystic science. Art only gives what the spirit sees, and the spirit sees only what exists. By his soul and body, man has relation with two worlds, the visible world and the invisible world; and he can, by his will, place the activity of his life in either

of them. If he chooses the visible world, and seeks in matter the gratification of his senses only, he may, even by his intellect, descend below the brute, and fall into excesses unknown to it. If, on the contrary, he chooses the invisible world, and seeks God, his beginning and end, he may disengage himself from earth, and let his soul breathe in higher regions. These two lives so different lead to opposite phenomena. The world perceives those produced by the brutishness of man, because there are infamies and crimes against which it is obliged to defend itself; but the supernatural life of the soul escapes it, because it is fulfilled in a sphere not its own. But what matters ignorance? It is as powerless against truth, as nothingness is against Being. Mystic facts exist, and modern science will be forced, one day, to study them, in order to understand matter itself. Form, motion and life are problems not to be solved without the intervention of a spiritual power.

Mysticism is the interior life of the Church, its intimate union with Christ, the unspeakable love which Solomon has made known to us in the Canticle of Canticles. The disciple whom our Lord loved was its Evangelist and Apostle, and, since his blessed repose on the sacred bosom of his Master, there have always been souls who have enjoyed these familiarities and divine caresses. We doubt not Beato Angelico tasted this happiness, and it explains to us the mysterious charm diffused over all his works.

But you will say, this supernatural life, this higher state of the soul, is it not a hindrance to the development of art? Is it not opposed to the realization of

natural beauty? Strange error, to believe that those only who abuse nature love and know it! These pretended lovers of the creation are only profaners of it, and their science is as false as their love. Outside God, what can we know in its beginning and end? And when the beginning and end of a thing is not known, what is left except vain appearances? Mystics, by purifying their senses, become strangers to the forms of our coarse passions; they are like to God, who in His perfect liberty cannot do evil. But precisely on this account, they are capable of seeing and rendering true natural beauty. They leave to others the fields desolated by original sin; they enter again the terrestrial paradise of grace and taste its delights. Seated under the shade of the tree of life, they contemplate at its fountain-head the river which is carrying its fertilizing streams to the extremities of the earth. God accompanies them through all creation, like a friend who himself will put his friend in possession of his domain; and because the least object becomes valuable when a friend has given it, everything is transfigured and appears divine to him who loves God.

And without here recalling the passion of the saints for their fellow-men, the love which makes them find Jesus Christ in the least and most miserable, the ardour which sends the missionary to martyrdom and the sister of charity into the hospitals, how much have not the saints loved and cherished nature! Look at the heart of S. Francis of Assisi dilating itself through the whole universe. Listen to him hailing his brother the sun, and speaking to his sisters the doves. He has knit again the true relations of man with creatures; they

understand and love each other, because they converse with God their Father.

Poor ignorant men! You believe that you have the monopoly of artistic enjoyments, and imagine that in loving God we cannot love His works! You think that you see the light, because you see its reflection on the dust around you. To contemplate it, we need to be upon the mountain of a holy life. There we are bathed in its splendour, which we see filling vast horizons, rejoicing the eagle in the air, giving strength to the cedars and fertility to the plains, and drawing dew-drops from the ocean, to shed them with its heat upon the flower of the prairies. Artistic enjoyments! There are more of them in the heart of the monk, who gathers that little flower to copy it on the margin of his manuscript, than in all your researches and learned works. Of what good are all your researches, your analyses, if in nature you do not love its Author? To know without loving, is to possess without enjoying. Blind slaves! Under the mill-stone of study, you are grinding the good grain of science; the pure wheat from it is reserved for love. You believe that your works are monuments which will protect the memory of you; and they are steps which will aid those who love God to love Him more.



CHAPTER V.

RETURN TO THE CONVENT AT FIESOLE.—PAINTINGS EXECUTED AT THAT PERIOD.—THE CORONATION OF THE B. VIRGIN, IN THE LOUVRE. (1418-1436.)



THE exiles of Fiesole sighed after their dear retreat. But the foundation-deed purported that an absence of two months should cause them to lose all right to the convent; and thus they found many difficulties in re-entering it. Beato Giovanni Dominici took steps with the bishop, who consented to their return by the way of a set-off of a hundred ducats. This set-off was paid out of the paternal inheritance which fell to S. Antoninus at this time. Providence did not stop there with regard to the Friar-Preachers: a rich merchant of Florence bequeathed them a sum of six thousand florins, and they employed it, not in embellishing, but in enlarging the convent.

The mountain of Fiesole is one of the most beau-

tiful of those which shelter the valley of the Arno against the north winds. A powerful town once occupied its summit; but Florence, its rival, overcame it, one day, and left nothing but ruins and recollections. Rich and wooded hills storey the sides of the mountain, and their lowest declivities watered by the Mugnone end at the gates of the Athens of the middle ages. On every side rise magnificent villas, to which the Platonists of the Renaissance repaired, to forget the divine teaching of the Gospel, and renew, beneath the beautiful shades, the learned conversations of the gardens of the Academy.

The convent of S. Domenico of Fiesole is built about midway up the mountain. The church opens on the high-road, and attracts the wayfarer by its pure and simple architecture, like the fountains which formerly offered a feat and limpid water to the weary traveller. The apse is surrounded with buildings and cloisters, all protected by a silent valley. Their quiet lines and simple disposition recall the Franciscan convents, so full of peace and lowliness. Nothing is finer for the soul than those palaces of poverty, the long corridors, the walls without ornament, the little windows, and the sweet light meeting with a holy image or a pious sentence. The ray of the sun penetrating the cells is like Jacob's ladder; angels are passing up and down, to exchange grace and prayer between God and man.

In this convent, Beato Angelico passed the best years of his life, and his masterpieces executed there have made it believed *that* solitude was his native place. He might have signed himself Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, as S. Louis used to sign Louis de Poissy; for there he

was born to religious life, and had received the most precious favours of heaven. He lived eighteen years there under the shadow of the altar, amidst his brethren, and in the joys of prayer and ecstasy.

How different is the life of the artist in the world! He who believes he has a vocation for the fine-arts has magnificent hopes at the beginning of his career. He aspires to a higher sphere, where he will contemplate supreme beauty and reflect it in his works. He hails from afar those pure enjoyments, the glory of which is but a set-off. He rushes with ardour forward towards the brilliant future; obstacles, privations, fatigue, nothing arrests him, and with all the enthusiasm of youth, he overcomes the difficulty of the first studies. But when he has put on the manly robe of talent, when he must needs enter into the public life which he had dreamed independent and glorious, he often finds himself in the presence of a sad reality. He meets with the world's injustices, perfidious envy, and the stupid encouragements of ignorance. Disquietude comes to trouble his boundless hopes, and need intercepts, like a fog, the distant light of glory which had misled him. When the artist is alone, he may struggle yet, and prolong his dream; but if he has united a wife to his lot, if he has a family to maintain, his heart trembles, his eyes are troubled, and it is no longer the palm, but bread, his hand is asking for. He will have to sacrifice his tastes, undergo the caprices of those that pay, endure their contumely, and exchange for a lucrative handicraft the holy mission which he thought he had received from heaven.

In a convent, on the contrary, the artist finds the happiest conditions for working out his noble destiny. He enjoys a profound peace, and there is nothing personal in his ambition. He seeks beauty in the love of Him who is its beginning; and all around puts far from him what might trouble the contemplation of it. His vows protect him with a triple rampart: chastity defends him against the passions which would sully the purity of his soul; poverty shelters him from disquietude of life; and obedience arrests discouragement, and makes him strong against himself. His existence flows away, peaceable and orderly as a brook enclosed in a marble conduit that it may not lead a-wandering over its flowery banks the valued waters destined for the ornament of the city. For him, art is a song, a prayer. He seeks not the praises and honours of the world. Can he even think of them when he enjoys the affection of his brethren, and hopes for the rewards of heaven?

Such was the life of Beato Angelico, and his years passed in the convent of Fiesole were, without doubt, the sweetest and the richest. From thirty to fifty years in his age, the artist is in all the activity of his mind and talent; afterwards the sap is less vigorous, and more slowly fruitful in new works. To this period, doubtless, we must attribute the greater number of our painter's pictures; for his last years were occupied especially in painting the frescoes in San Marco and the Vatican. Glory came early to visit his retreat, and every one would have pictures from his hand. He refused no one; and Vasari has preserved this pleasing

answer, "Obtain the Prior's consent, and I will always do what may please you."¹ It is difficult for us to classify these pictures, which are not dated. We will, nevertheless, examine them in a certain order, aiding ourselves by some facts and documents. First of all, we will speak of the paintings he executed for the convent of Fiesole: he must have done them before he dwelt at Florence, and they have a great resemblance to those of Cortona and Perugia.

Beato Angelico did two paintings in fresco; one for the refectory, the other for the chapter-room, which afterwards became the hospice for strangers. The fresco in the refectory represents our Lord crucified, and the Holy Virgin, S. John the Evangelist and S. Dominic, kneeling at the foot of the Cross. The composition is simple and grave; its execution must have been remarkable, judging by the portions which have escaped the restoration made, in 1566, by one Francesco Mariani.² The heads and hands are still beautiful, but the feet and draperies have suffered much. The room in which this painting is, serves as a store for greens and garden-tools.³

¹ "Con amorevolezza a ogniuno che ricercava opre da lui, diceva, che ne facesse esser contento il Priore, ed egli sempre farebbe cosa, che gli fosse in piacere.— (VASARI, edition of 1550.)"

² *Chron. of S. Domenico of Fiesole*, fol. 164. Similiter pinxit aliquas figuras hic Fesulis in refectorio, in capitulo veteri quod modò est hospitium secularium. *And fol. 10.* Restaurata est etiam pictura ipsius refectorii, in qua Crucifixi imagines, et beatæ Virginis ac beati Joannis visuntur. Hæc omnia quæ artis pictoriæ sunt, faciebat peritissimus juvenis, et qui magnam de se spem excitavit, Franciscus Mariani de Florentiâ. Expofuit autem in his omnibus prior ipse ven. libras sexaginta ex R. P. F. Angeli Diaceti et aliorum amicorum elemosinas.—(P. MARCHESE, lib. ii, c. 5, p. 232.)

[On the front wall of the refectory he painted a Crucifixion (life size), with the Blessed Virgin on one side, and S. John the Evangelist on the other: at

The second fresco is now seen at the top of a staircase in a private dwelling. It represents the Virgin on her throne, holding on her knees her Son, whom a portion of her veil covers. On her right and left, are S. Dominic and S. Thomas Aquinas, with open books. The head of the Virgin, although it is very beautiful, seems to have been retouched by a painter of Perugino's time, perhaps by Lorenzo di Credi.¹

the foot of the Cross, kneeling, and seen from behind, is S. Dominic; but this last figure seems to have been introduced at a subsequent period. We cannot now appreciate the colouring or design of this painting, as the hand of some very ignorant person, who undertook to restore it, and the vandalism of the parties who got possession of it, have all but cancelled it. The continuator of the Chronicle of the convent of S. Domenico at Fiesole, tells how it was restored by a young Florentine artist, named Francesco Mariani, in 1556; but, heavens, after what a fashion! enlarging the outlines, and heightening the colours, so as to efface altogether these delicate mezzotints, these lines so beautifully varied, and the simplicity of the drapery, in order to introduce all the defects peculiar to an age when art was in its decadence. Finally, when the convent was taken from the religious, the refectory was turned into a fruit store, to the great injury of this painting. Notwithstanding, the beautiful head of S. John is admirably preserved, as is also the nude of the Redeemer."—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, p. 193.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

¹ ["But the history that he painted in the chapter-room, though known to very few, is well preserved, and deserves to be classed amongst the best works of the Angelico. Here he painted the Blessed Virgin seated, and, as in the Perugian picture, holding the Divine Babe on her knees. The Infant is nude, but the white veil that covers our Lady's head and bosom falls gracefully over Him. On her right is S. Dominic, standing; on the left, S. Thomas of Aquino; both having an open book. The Founder of the Preaching Friars (a mode of representing him unusual to this painter) has his chin covered with a flowing beard, and holds in his hand a lily, the emblem of his virginity—a simple composition, and well calculated to awaken devout feelings in the spectator. Few of the Angelico's works present more beauty in the expression of the countenances, or more negligence in the extremities and necessary accessories, than this does. The type of the Virgin is perhaps less ideal than usual; it reminds us of Raffaello and Pietro Perugino; and it is impressed with such beauty and majesty, that we are almost forced to kneel down and worship in presence of that image. Wonderfully beautiful are the faces of S. Dominic and the Infant; that of S. Thomas is the most beautiful in its design and colouring. But we no sooner set about examining the extremities of these figures, and the folds of the drapery, than we are

Vafari informs us that Beato Angelico painted three pictures for the conventual church. "He also painted," says he, "the picture on the high altar, at S. Domenico of Fiesole; but this, perhaps because it appeared to have been injured, has been retouched by other masters, and spoiled. Still the predella and the tabernacle of the B. Sacrament are much better preserved; and the numerous little figures seen there, surrounded by a celestial glory, are so beautiful that they seem truly to belong to paradise, nor can he who approaches them be ever weary of regarding their beauty."¹ This picture, in fact, was restored by Lorenzo di Credi, when the tribune of the church was repaired, in 1501, and the high altar reconstructed. Even the shape of it was changed, and the gradino replaced by a copy. The original must be now in the possession of the heirs of Sig. Valentini of Rome. The tabernacle has been lost.²

This picture represents the Virgin on a throne with

obliged to ask ourselves, whether the same hand that outlined and coloured the countenances finished the rest of the work. So much so, that in many places we do not recognize these exquisite foldings of the robes, so peculiar to Fra Angelico; and the feet of S. Thomas and S. Dominic look like a large blot. This led me to suspect that the same artist who had attempted to restore the fresco in the refectory, had likewise injured the drapery and the extremities of that in the chapter-room. A distinguished painter, who examined it with me, is of opinion that it exhibits evident signs of having been retouched at a later period."—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, p. 194.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

¹ Dipinse similmente a S. Domenico di Fiesole la tavola dell' altar maggiore: la qual perchè forse pareva che si guastasse, è stata ritocca da altri maestri, e peggiorata: ma la predella ed il ciborio del Sacramento sonosi meglio mantenuti.—By the words *predella*, *gradino*, are designated the series of little subjects, which the old painters placed beneath their pictures.

² Circa anno Domini 1501 . . . tabula altaris majoris renovata est et reducta in quadrum, et additæ picturæ supius (*sic*) et ornamenta tabulæ per singularem pictorem Laurentium de Credis.—(*Chron. of S. Dom. of Fiesole*, fol. 5 à tergo.)

her Divine Son, having on one side S. Peter the Apostle and S. Thomas Aquinas, and on the other S. Dominic and S. Peter Martyr : in the foreground, angels are in adoration. By its simplicity and dignity, this composition recalls the great school of Giotto. The gradino justifies Vasari's eulogy ; it is the *Alleluia* of the resurrection of our Saviour. The subject is divided into three compartments. In the centre, Christ rises with his victorious standard ; a multitude of angels surround him, and appear to carry him on a buckler ; they announce his glory to all the world, to the sound of trumpets and instruments. On each side, a great crowd of saints take part in the joy of the triumph. It is difficult to conceive a more lyric composition.

The second picture represented an Annunciation. "In the chapel of the same church," says Vasari, "is a picture from the same hand, representing our Lady receiving the annunciation from the angel Gabriel, with a countenance in profile so devout, so delicate, and so well executed, that it appears truly not by man, but to have been made in paradise. In the landscape forming the background, are Adam and Eve, who were the occasion of the Redeemer's incarnation by the Virgin. In the predella are likewise some extremely beautiful little histories."¹ This picture, which must have very closely resembled the one at Cortona, has been lost ; it was parted with, after two years' negotiations, to Mario Farnese, for 1500 ducats, which served

¹ In una cappella della medesima chiesa è di sua mano, in una tavola la nostra Donna annunziata dall' Angelo Gabbriello, con un profilo di viso tanto devoto, delicato, e ben fatto, che par veramente non da un uomo, ma fatto in paradiso. E nel campo del pacre è Adamo ed Eva, che furono cagione che della Virgine incarnasse il Redentore. Nella predella ancora sono alcune storiette bellissime.

to rebuild the campanile, and to do the wainscotings of the choir. The religious, who has entered the bargain on the registers of the convent, gives thanks to God, and to the angelic painter who, after one hundred and sixty years, has again rendered so great a service to the convent.¹

France has the good fortune to possess the third picture executed for the church of Fiesole. Vafari thus expresses himself about this picture: "But above all the works of Fra Giovanni, and one in which he has surpassed himself, is a picture in the same church, near the door on the left hand of the entrance. In this he proves the high quality of his powers, as well as his profound intelligence of the art he practised. The subject is the Coronation of the Virgin by Jesus Christ: the principal figures are surrounded by a choir of angels and a vast number of saints, male and female. These figures are so numerous, so well executed, in attitudes so varied, and with expressions of countenance so diversified, that one experiences incredible pleasure and delight in looking at them. Nay, it seems as though these blessed spirits cannot be otherwise in heaven; or, to speak more correctly, could not, if they had forms, appear otherwise. For all the saints here, male and female, have not only life and expression most delicately and truly rendered, but the

¹ Qual tavola si consegnò come ci era ordine al P. Carlo Strozzi, insieme con la sua predella, dove erano dipinte cinque storiette della B. Vergine, tutte opera del detto pittore, etc. . . . Di tutto sia lode e onore al Signore, si ancora al nostro Angelico pittore, dal quale, dopo l'età di circa 160 anni ha sentito il nostro convento cotanto beneficio.—(P. MARCHESE, t. i, p. 400.)

[This painting was sold in 1611, but a copy of it was left in the church of S. Domenico. The original and the copy are now both lost.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

whole colouring of this work seems to have been executed by the hand of a saint or of an angel like themselves. Thus it was with sufficient reason that this good religious has been always called Fra Giovanni Angelico. The histories of our Lady and S. Dominic adorning the predella are in the same divine manner; and, for myself, I can in truth affirm that I never see this work without its appearing to me something new, nor do I ever leave it fatiated."¹

We do not, like Vafari, rank this painting above all the works of Beato Angelico, but we regard it as one of the most remarkable. The detailed examination we are going to make of it, will justify, we hope, to our readers the sincere enthusiasm of the celebrated critic of the Renaissance.

What was the artist's thought? How has he expressed it with his heart and pencil? The subject of the picture is the Coronation of the Virgin, so often represented by the painters of the old school. No subject can be more pleasing to God and man: to God, because it is the glorification of His most perfect creature; to men, because they find in this triumph the most fruitful cause of their joys and hopes. Thus Beato Angelico has very often treated it; but he has almost always followed tradition, by representing Mary seated at the right of her Son and receiving the crown from Him: it is the triumph of her maternity. Here the subject is treated differently. The age and attitude of the Virgin, the manner of arranging the scene, and the saints assisting at it, would make us

¹ E io per me posso con verità affermare, che non veggio mai questa opera che non mi paia cosa nuova, nè me ne parto mai fazio.

believe that the painter has chosen a particular title in the litanies sung by the church in praise of Mary, and that he has wished to crown her *Queen of Virgins*.

To give expression to his idea, his chaste pencil seems to have translated the verses of the Cantic of Canticles explained and paraphrased with so much purity by S. Bernard and S. Thomas Aquinas; and he set himself to the work, no doubt, after he had chanted with his brethren the sweet words commencing the office of the Assumption in the Order of S. Dominic:—"Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee: thy lips are as a dropping honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue: the odour of thy garments is beyond all spices. For the winter is now passed, the rain is over and gone, the flowers have appeared, the vines in flower yield their sweet smell, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. Arise, make haste, my love, and come from Libanus; come, and thou shalt be crowned."¹ The ceremony takes place before the porch of the heavenly Jerusalem. The throne upon which our Lord is to seat Mary is raised upon nine steps, figurative of the nine choirs of angels. "The things which have been said unto thee are accomplished in thee; behold, thou art exalted above the choirs of angels."² Under a rich Gothic canopy ornamented with magnificent tapestry,

¹ Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te: favus distillans labia tua, mel et lac sub lingua tua, odor vestimentorum tuorum super omnia aromata: jam enim hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit, flores apparuerunt, vineæ florentes odorem suum dederunt, et vox turturis audita est in terra nostra: Surge, propera, amica mea, et veni de Libano; veni, coronaberis.

² Perfecta sunt in te quæ dicta sunt tibi: ecce exaltata es super choros angelorum.

"Christ has prepared for his most chaste Mother the place of her immortality : it is a festival incomparably more excellent than all the festivals of the saints,"¹ and in it the Blessed Virgin is to triumph in presence of all the heavenly court. Our Lord holds with both hands the crown he is going to place on his Mother's head. Mary is kneeling before him, bending a little, and with her arms crossed upon her breast. Around the throne, four-and-twenty angels sing her praises, and play on various instruments. Near them, and upon the steps of the throne, are arranged the saints of the Old and New Testament: Moses, David and the Apostles S. Peter and S. Paul. In the foreground, are placed two groups of privileged saints who have glorified virginity the most by their example and teaching. All are kneeling, and the position of their heads and the expression of their countenances indicate the sweetest and purest joy.

If we seek now to penetrate the idea of the artist and to analyze the perfection of his work, we shall see how he has followed tradition, and clothed the ancient types with his angelical individuality.

The Supreme Artist has created types by realizing, in time and space, His eternal ideas. These types are perpetuated by immutable laws, and manifest, according to their kind, the invisible things God has willed to make them say.

Man also creates types. He expresses his religious and social ideas by works of art, which generations

¹ Ascendit Christus super cœlos, et præparavit suæ castissimæ Matri immortalitatis locum. Et hæc est illa præclara festivitas, omnium sanctorum festivitatibus incomparabilis.

understand and transmit to each other. Genius, first realizing these types, does nothing but give the belief of his age, and renders to it a form, which those who come after may modify, but without changing its essential character, which remains invariable, as in the species of Divine creation.

Pagan art has created types for all religions, and Greece especially had remarkable ones. Its poets, painters and sculptors personified the Divine attributes which they saw reflected in nature. They deified the effects of the First Cause, and endeavoured to express His power, wisdom, intelligence and beauty, by human forms. All their belief, ideas and passions were an image, a type. Error had narrowed the field of truth for them, but their genius knew how to fill up the limited horizon. Phidias was worthy of Plato, and the artist rose to the height of the philosopher. There was balance between the interior and the exterior form.

For Christians, this balance is, so to say, impossible, so sublime are the ideas they have to give. Supreme Truth, by descending on the earth and rendering it fertile, has opened an immense, an infinite horizon to the fine-arts. Between Christian and Pagan types there must be the distance of truth and error. These types the Church has fixed by her doctrine and worship, and for many ages artists have been seeking to clothe them with their form. It is not the question to know if these artists have equalled the material perfection of the ancients; we say only that the models they have to give are superior to those of the Greeks, and

that the Gospel calls them to a progress without bounds.

- The supreme type of Christian art is Jesus Christ, the perfect image of God, the splendour of the Father ; beauty inexpressible, a ray of which burst forth on the day of the transfiguration ; beauty so sweet and ravishing, notwithstanding the veil covering it in the Incarnation, that it was necessary to take away its sensible presence from the Apostles and disciples, because the enjoyment would have rendered virtue too easy, and the happiness of it is reserved for eternity.

After Christ, comes Mary, the type of all graces and virtues : Mary, the purest mirror of the divinity : Virgin, Spouse, and above all Mother, carrying these titles as a triple and indivisible crown to the highest heavens.

Angels also have put on bodies, and artists may essay to give under human forms the sublime functions of their different hierarchies. Then come the multitude of saints, male and female, of the Old and New Testament, lighting up with their presence the succession of ages, and being united to us by the Church in the bosom of their eternity : the patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, confessors, virgins, all those living beauties that the artist can contemplate and invoke by the light of faith : inexhaustible ocean of inspirations for those who do not satisfy themselves with the gross individualities which are insults to truth.

Types so perfect cannot be realized by one single artist : ages work slowly at them, and the first duty of him who wishes to give them is to consult tradition.

Beato Angelico has faithfully done this. He has collected the light of those who had gone before him, whilst increasing and endowing it with his own colouring. By examining his works, it is easy to see that he has consulted the two great schools, Greek and Latin. His types of Christ show remarkable differences. His heart seems never to have been satisfied. Sometimes he follows the type of Giotto, and gives our Saviour a powerful manliness. Sometimes, on the contrary, his types are extremely youthful, and it is the tender Lamb who redeemed the world. In the picture now occupying us, the painter has given Christ a middle age. The Fairest of the children of men is arrayed with magnificence; a rich crown glitters on his brow, luxuriant hair falls down on his neck, and the mantle thrown over his shoulders envelopes the lower part of his body. Everything in his person is calm and pure; truly it is he, whose blood buds forth virgins.¹

For his types of the Blessed Virgin, Beato Angelico, we have already said, seems to have studied much the Madonnas of the school of Sienna, so sweet, so melancholy, and so full of the love of God and the thought of the Passion. He usually represents Mary in the glory of her maternity, but here she is the virgin rather than the mother. He has given her the age when she sought to hide her virginity under the marriage-veil: the age of fourteen years, which death restored to her when she left the earth to go and reign with her Son. This figure of the Blessed Virgin makes us

¹ Quid enim bonum ejus est, et quid pulchrum ejus, nisi frumentum electorum et vinum germinans virgines?—(ZACHARIAS, ix, 17.)

understand what S. Thomas said of her beauty, the sight of which purified the senses instead of disturbing them. It is, indeed, the dove of the Canticle of Canticles, that goeth up by the desert as a light cloud of smoke of myrrh, frankincense and the sweetest perfumes.¹ Rich garments hide the shape of her body, and allow her face and hands alone to appear, the only parts of her most pure being which man's eye had seen. She is kneeling, bowed sweetly towards her Son, her eyes cast down, and her arms crossed upon her breast. Her hair is platted and arranged as a crown with charming grace; her head is covered with a transparent veil falling down upon her neck; and a richly-fringed mantle falls from her shoulders and covers her feet. A more chaste and heavenly figure cannot be imagined.

But the genius of our painter shines mostly in his types of the angels. It is very difficult to clothe the blessed spirits with a body; and there are, perhaps, no Christian subjects more unworthily profaned by the Renaissance. The old schools had represented angels such as they appear to us in the Bible. At one time, they are the cherubim of the prophets, with their bodies of flame and their wings to veil themselves before the Eternal; at another time, the angels of Abraham, of Jacob and Tobias, clad in the shape of youth, to visit men and bring them messages from on high. This type prevailed in the school of Giotto, who always knew how, despite the elegance of their shape and the length of their robe, to preserve his angels from a feminine character. Beato Angelico has imitated the angels of

¹ Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhæ et thuris, et universi pulveris pigmentarii?—(*Cant.* iii, 6.)

Giotto, but he has made them younger, in order to give them a more virginal beauty. They are not infants like those of the school of Perugino : that age does not sufficiently express the zeal and intelligence of those ministers of God. They are youths, at that time of life when the expanding heart is all light and sincerity, unruffled by the breath of the passions. The angels assisting at the coronation of the Queen of Virgins are the pages of the heavenly court ; their whole being expresses intelligence and love. If nature has been consulted in painting them, the artist has altogether spiritualized it ; but it is more probable, as Vasari thinks, that he copied his graceful models by the light of his ecstasies.

These angels are twenty-four in number. They recall those that are celebrating the Triumph of S. Francis on the arch of the lower church at Assisi. They are clothed in embroidered tunics which veil their feet ; a little flame shines above their heads. The most distant are sounding the trumpet, and announce on every side the coronation of their Queen : the nearest are singing and accompanying themselves on various instruments. So sweet is their expression and so graceful their attitude, that they express to the eye the charm of their heavenly harmony.

The choice of the saints assisting at this festival must be remarked. Beato Angelico has written their names and glorious titles in the aureolas of some of them. The Old Testament is represented by Moses and David, the law and the prophets. Moses, the chosen servant of God, *sanctus Moyses Dei famulus et electus*, contemplates the star come forth from Jacob, the woman who

crushed the serpent's head by escaping original sin. David hails the honour of his posterity, the Queen who is going to sit at the right hand of the Saviour, in the gold of her vestments and the variety of her attire.¹

After Moses and David, comes S. John Baptist, the precursor of Christ, *Johannes Baptista, precursor Domini*, the link between the old and new law, the man visited by the Blessed Virgin before his birth who died at the court of Herod in defending chastity. Afterwards come the Apostles, having at their head S. Peter, doorkeeper of the kingdom of heaven, *sanctus Petrus claviger regni cælorum constitutus*; and S. Paul, doctor of the Gentiles, *sanctus Paulus, doctor Gentilium vocitatus*. Both have their traditional emblems and places. S. Andrew; S. Bartholomew; S. James; S. Simon; S. Matthias; S. Philip; S. Thaddeus; S. Matthew; S. James the Greater; and nearest to the throne and to the angels, S. John the Evangelist, the well-beloved disciple of God, *sanctus Johannes evangelista, dilectus Deo*, the virgin-apostle, the adopted son of Mary, the gentle old man, who saw in Patmos *her* who is clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head.²

On the right of the throne, below S. John the Evangelist, the artist has placed S. Dominic, the founder of the Order cherished by the Blessed Virgin, holding the spotless lily of virginity, *conservans sine macula virginitatis lilium*. Beato Angelico has painted

¹ Astitit regina à dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato, circumdata varietate.—(Ps. xlv, 9.)

² Mulier amicta sole, et luna sub pedibus ejus, et in capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim.—(Apoc., xii, 1.)

the glorious patriarch with filial love. He has written upon his open book, as a promise to be faithful to them, the three recommendations left by him for an heritage to his disciples: "Have charity, keep humility, possess voluntary poverty;" then he has added the prayer recited every day in his Order: "O wondrous hope, which thou gavest to those that wept for thee at the hour of death, when thou didst promise after death to do thy brethren good. Father, fulfil what thou hast said, and help us by thy prayers: thou who hast shone by so many signs wrought on the bodies of the sick, bring us the help of Christ to heal our sickly ways."¹ Near S. Dominic is S. Augustin, whose rule the Friar-Preachers follow. He holds in his hand the pen with which he celebrated so well the wonders of divine grace.

At the foot of the steps, and on the same side, are kneeling other founders of Orders: S. Benedict, S. Anthony, S. Francis, and perhaps S. Bernard, whose figure is not seen. In the foreground, S. Louis, with his crown of fleurs-de-lis.² The presence of S. Louis is easily explained by his tender devotion to the Holy Virgin, and by his connection with the Friar-Preachers,

¹ Charitatem habete, humilitatem servate, paupertatem voluntariam possedete.—O spem miram quam dedisti, mortis horâ te flentibus, dum post mortem promissisti te profuturum fratribus. Imple, Pater, quod dixisti, nos tuis juvans, precibus; qui tot signis claruisti in ægrorum corporibus, nobis opem ferens Christi ægris medere moribus.

² Schlegel wished to see in this personage a S. Charlemagne, and has explained even to the three little crowns serving for ornament to his mantle, by his threefold title as Emperor, King of the Franks and King of the Lombards. The cultus of Charlemagne has never been accepted in Italy. The Golden Legend only represents the great emperor delivered from the hands of the devil, in consideration of his pious foundations; and the monk Vetin, in his vision, shows him to us in the flames of purgatory, being purified from the pleasures of the flesh which he loved too well.

his confessors and friends. He was of the Third Order of S. Dominic,¹ and very intimate with S. Thomas Aquinas, whom he often invited to his table. Beato Angelico has represented him conversing with the angelic Doctor, who seems to be explaining to the holy king the scene he contemplates. In the open book S. Thomas carries, are written the first verses of the *Te Deum*.

Near this group, is S. Nicholas, the protector of purity. At his knees, the painter has placed three gold balls, to recall the three purses he threw into the house of the poor nobleman to preserve his daughters from seduction. The costly chafuble of the bishop is ornamented with a large figured band, on which are represented some features of our Lord's life. These sketches are painted with an astonishing freedom of pencil. They seem done after the pictures by Giotto, preserved in the Academy of Florence.

On the opposite side, is a group of female saints, whose expressions and figures are as poetical and pure as their legends. They are separated from the Apostles on the left of the throne by several young saints, patrons and defenders of virginity. S. Peter Martyr, his head bathed with the blood with which he writes the words, *Credo in Deum*, at the moment he gave up his last breath. S. George, the Christian knight, who saves a virgin from the fangs of the infernal monster. S. Stephen and S. Lawrence, the two young deacons of the Eastern and Western Churches, who bear the double aureola of charity and purity. Death united

[¹ This is an error of the author; S. Louis was a *Franciscan* Tertiary, not a Dominican Tertiary.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

them in a sweet brotherhood. Those who were carrying the body of S. Stephen to Rome were miraculously forced to go and lay it in the tomb of S. Lawrence, whose bones drew back of themselves to make room for the holy relics, and to share with them the homage of the faithful.¹

The group of holy women assisting at the Coronation of the Virgin is one of rapturous beauty. It is perhaps the most admirable part of this work of Beato Angelico.

Below S. George is S. Urfula, holding the arrow which unites her by death to her divine spouse. Nothing is more pure and graceful than the movement of her head. Kneeling in front of her, with the wheel and palm of her martyrdom, is S. Catherine of Alexandria, the learned virgin, who converted fifty philosophers to the faith. She forms a pendant to S. Thomas Aquinas, and converses with S. Agnès, who carries in her arms the lamb symbolical of meekness. Near S. Catherine of Alexandria, between two female saints not made known by any symbol, is S. Catherine of Sienna in the joys of ecstasy.²

Nearer towards the centre, S. Cecilia, with the crown of flowers, which never lose their freshness and perfume and chaste hearts alone can see.³ Lastly, S. Mary Mag-

¹ Laurentius adventui fratris sui quasi congratulans et arridens, in alteram partem sepulchri secessit, et medietatem illius vacuum fratri reliquit.—(*Leg. aurea*, c. cxii, de Inventione S. Steph. Protom.)

² In the "Life of S. Catherine of Sienna," I have given the reasons which make me see in this figure the very faithful portrait of that great saint. Schlegel has taken the figure for a S. Clare, but without giving any proof of it.

³ Angelus autem duas coronas ex rosis et liliis in manu habebat, et unam Cæciliæ, et alteram Valeriano tradidit, dicens: Iſtas coronas immaculato corde et mundo corpore custodite, quia de paradiso Dei eas ad vos attuli, nec unquam

dalen, with her long hair that wiped our Saviour's feet, and the little vase of spices designed to honour his burial. S. Augustine and S. Mary Magdalen are the patron saints of the Order of S. Dominic; but it may also be believed that the artist, by placing them in this picture, wished to honour purity recovered by the tears of repentance.

No description can give the holiness of all these figures; and to understand them well, it would be necessary to read and meditate the texts which have inspired the artist, the beautiful prayers he addressed to the saints in the office of the Order, and the pages of the Golden Legend, that inexhaustible source of poetry.

The talent of the artist has been worthy of his inspiration, and the execution of this picture is very remarkable. The composition of it is happy, and it is impossible to arrange so great a number of figures more skilfully in so small a space. They form a circle around the throne, the elevation of which on steps has allowed their being disposed one over another without confusion or monotony. The centre is free and leaves to the two principal personages the whole of their importance. The variety of the groups and the movement of the heads concur to unity instead of obscuring it. Notwithstanding the difficulty of the point of sight taken from the last step, the perspective is unblameable. The canopy crowning the throne presents a charming design of Gothic architecture, and

marcescent, nec odorem amittent, nec ab aliis, nisi quibus castitas placuerit, videri poterunt.—(*Leg. aurea*, de Sanctâ Cæcilia, c. clxix.)

the long trumpets setting off the top of the composition enlarge the space in an ingenious manner.

The drawing leaves nothing to be wished for; although the long draperies hide the shape of the bodies and the feet of all the personages, the attitudes are very well given, and the movements of the heads especially are admirably fine. The figures are drawn with inimitable purity, and the model has a perfection which can only be understood by trying to copy it. The hands alone are a little neglected. The draperies are quiet and graceful. The artist has displayed in them an unheard-of luxury of ornament. All the stuffs are enriched with magnificent designs and delicate embroidery. The aureolas are loaded with gold and jewels. All these details are varied with an incredible fertility of imagination, and executed with a care which might be called devotion.

This picture is painted with egg, upon wood, on a gold ground. The colouring is agreeable to the eye; and notwithstanding the multiplicity of the details, the injuries of time and some clumsy restorations, the look of it is sweet and harmonious. The more we view this painting, the more do we understand Vafari, when he says, "I never see this work without its seeming something new to me, nor do I ever leave it satiated."

The great Christian school painted beneath their pictures a series of little compositions representing the legend of a saint. The artist displayed in them with more liberty the treasures of his imagination and the originality of his talent. This little poem in honour of a saint was called in Italy a *predella*, a *gradino*, a

step, because it raised the principal picture, and served as a step to the altar-piece.¹ Cannot there also be seen a symbolical signification in these words very natural to the language of the middle ages? The Christian artist represented the saints in the repose of glory, as the Greek artist represented heroes in the immobility of triumph. The lower pictures were consecrated to the life on earth, which is the step to the life to come. The gradino showed that we reach heaven by trial and combat: it taught the fundamental truth of religion, that by imitating the Passion of our Lord, we arrive at his glory.

This explanation is proved by the gradino of the Coronation of the Virgin, since the central subject is what Italians call a *Pietà*, a compassion. In it, our Lord appears coming out of the tomb and surrounded by the instruments of his punishment, to show us his wounds and invite us to share in his sufferings. In front of him, are seated, in contemplation and prayer, the Holy Virgin and S. John the Evangelist, the two great representatives of humanity on Calvary: Mary who has brought us forth in pain, and the well-beloved disciple who inherited the rights of Jesus Christ in his Mother's heart.

The six subjects into which this composition is divided, are taken from the life of S. Dominic. The choice was natural enough in a convent of Friar-Preachers. The life of the glorious Patriarch is as rich in inspirations as that of S. Francis of Assisi. It

[¹ The gradino was adopted, in order to raise the picture quite above the foot of the candlesticks on the altar; and it was ornamented with pious subjects calculated to excite the devotion of the priest.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

presents the same virtues, and those virtues were developed on a scene more vast and mingled with greater events. Spain, France and Italy were witnesses of the apostleship of S. Dominic, and the most celebrated and learned cities of Europe admired his miracles and learning.

The first composition represents the vision of Innocent III. When he hesitated to give his approval to a new order in the Church, he saw during sleep S. Dominic supporting the basilica of S. John Lateran, as it was about to fall. The figure of the saint is admirable for movement and impulse. With the strength of faith and love, he supports the gaping walls of the building which proudly bears the title of "Head and mother of all the churches of the world." In the background of the picture, the Sovereign Pontiff reposes on an estrade, above which is drawn the castle of San Angelo. He is lying on his bed in full costume, with the tiara on his head and his whole body enveloped in a magnificent cope. This luxury and these vestments during sleep may shock such as see historical truth only in coarse reality, and Schlegel himself begs pardon for the painter, by excusing this simplicity of the times, and by praising the gracefulness and ease of the calmly-sleeping figure. He would, no doubt, have preferred that the Sovereign Pontiff were represented in common *déshabille*, with some device and details indicating his name and dignity; and the dream would have been seen in the distance or on a cloud. Beato Angelico has conceived his subject more happily. S. Dominic is in the foreground, and his symbolical action is given perfectly. We understand

that this scene is a vision. At the end of the little deserted and flowery court, the bed, whereon the Sovereign Pontiff reposes, is raised like a throne: his attitude is chaste and respectful, and if his vestments are not those of a sleeping man, they are those of a pope receiving a divine communication. There is intelligence and truth, then, in what appears only simple. The aim of art is to express ideas, and to this all its means should concur. The details are at the service of thought, as the body is at the service of the soul. Thus have the ancients understood art, and thus will true artists always understand it.

The second picture represents the mission of S. Dominic. "The two Apostles, S. Peter and S. Paul, appeared to him, S. Peter presenting him with a staff, S. Paul with a book, and he heard a voice saying to him, 'Go and preach, for unto it thou art chosen:' and at the same time he saw his disciples, two and two, spreading over the whole world to evangelize it. From that day forward, he constantly carried with him the epistles of S. Paul and the gospel of S. Matthew, and whether travelling or dwelling in a town, he never walked without a staff in his hand."¹ The figures of S. Peter and S. Paul hover majestically in the air; the perspective of the nave of the church hides the lower part of their bodies, and gives the idea of an apparition. The eagerness of S. Dominic to receive the symbols of his mission, happily expresses his zeal to fulfil it. The beautiful church in which the scene passes, is not, as Schlegel supposed, a faithful representation of the ancient basilica of S. Pietro. Beato Angelico had not

¹ *Vie de S. Dominique*, p. 392.

yet been at Rome when he painted this picture; but in default of an archæological exactitude, we may admire the graceful architectural design, a creation, doubtless, of his own talent, like the one adorning the next picture.

It represents the raising to life of the young Napoleone. This miracle is celebrated in the life of S. Dominic. It marks one of the great epochs of his Order, the taking possession of the convent of Santa Sabina and the surrender of the convent of San Sisto to the nuns of Santa Maria in Trastevere, whom S. Dominic reformed, by sending for five French nuns from his dear convent of Our Lady of Prouille. All those who were to take part in that double event were assembled, Feb. 18th, 1218, at San Sisto, when some one came to announce that the nephew of cardinal Stefano da Fossanuova had just been killed by a fall from his horse. S. Dominic celebrated the holy sacrifice of the mass, and went with all the assistants to the room where the body had been laid; and after having prayed and made the sign of the cross over the dead body, he commanded him, in the name of Jesus Christ, to rise. The young man arose, and the saint restored him joyful and without hurt to his uncle, the cardinal, who was present.¹

¹ The room in which this miracle occurred still exists. The Dominican pope Benedict XIII, a descendant of the young man restored to life, went every year, in spring or autumn, to pass some days of retreat in the chambers above this room. The Rev. P. Besson has just decorated it with large mural pictures, which prove that, in the Dominican Order, talent still continues to be the ornament of virtue.

[P. Besson was an artist of great skill, and his early death is much deplored. He executed, too, some frescoes of the life of S. Dominic on the wall of the refectory of San Clemente in Rome. They were done at the request of the Rev. F. Joseph Mullooly, prior of that convent, who is himself now rendering the

The scene is given with rare merit in the composition. In a corner of the picture, is seen the horse trampling the young Napoleone beneath his feet. Under a little building, open, and supported by elegant pillars, the various spectators are skilfully grouped. The young man, stretched on the foreground, holds up his arms to S. Dominic, who, standing, commands him calmly and sweetly. All the assistants are in astonishment and in the act of giving thanks. The cardinal, Stefano da Fossanuova, is near the saint. Kneeling in front of him with clasped hands, is a young woman, sister or spouse of the resuscitated man. Behind him, an older woman, no doubt his mother, is leaning forward, to assure herself of his perfect cure. The figure of S. Dominic is in a fine style, and the profile of the woman on her knees, of enchanting purity. It is evident that the same study has served for this figure and for the Virgin in the Coronation. It is the same kind of nature, the same face, the same head-dress and the same costume; but we may admire how well the artist, to paint the Blessed Virgin, has known how to spiritualize a type already so perfect.

The fourth subject represents the ordeal of doctrines which took place at Montreal, in the diocese of Carcassone. After many discussions with the Albigenses, S. Dominic proposed to them to cast into the fire the books containing the exposition of their

greatest services to art and to Christian archæology, by his discovery of the ancient subterranean basilica of S. Clemente. The frescoes which he is still exploring and restoring possess a value and an interest unsurpassed by any similar ancient Christian monuments in the first city of the world.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

doctrine. The book of the heretics was instantly consumed, whilst that of the faint was thrice spared by the flames.¹

This composition has many points of resemblance with the gradino at Cortona; but it shows the artist's progress since his return to Fiesole. In the first picture, the figures recall the school of Giotto, by the simplicity of the drawing and the naturalness of the movements. In the second, whilst preserving the dignity of the style and the truth of the expressions, Beato Angelico has given more freedom to his groups, more pliancy to his draperies, and more feeling to his figures. The pupil of tradition has been developed by the study of nature. The double scene of the delivery of the book and the ordeal by fire is arranged perfectly. S. Dominic's gesture explains his proposal very well. The young brother who is following him is a model of religious modesty. The different feelings agitating the heretical witnesses of the miracle are also very skilfully expressed.

The next picture is a literal rendering of the charming recital in the account Sister Cecilia has given of the life of S. Dominic. "When the brethren were still living at the church of San Sisto, and were a hundred in number, on a certain day, Blessed Dominic commanded Fra Giovanni of Calabria and Fra Alberto the Roman to go about the town and quest for alms. But they employed themselves to no purpose from morning to the third hour of the day.

¹ A like miracle took place also at Fanjeaux; and in the church of that town are still seen the hearthstone on which the fire was kindled, and a beam bearing the traces of the fire.

They were then returning home, and had already reached the church of Santa Anastasia, when a woman who had a great devotion to the Order met them, and seeing that they carried nothing back with them, gave them a loaf, saying, "I will not have you return quite empty." A little farther on, they were accosted by a man, who earnestly begged charity of them. They excused themselves from giving, because they had nothing for themselves; but when the man continued all the more importunate, they said to one another, "What shall we do with one loaf? Let us give it to him for the love of God." Then they gave him the bread, and immediately lost sight of him. Now, as they were entering the convent, the pious Father, to whom the Holy Ghost had already revealed all that had passed, came to meet them, and said with a cheerful air, "Children, have you nothing?" "No, Father," they replied; and they related to him what had happened, and how they had given the loaf to a poor man. He said to them, "It was an angel of the Lord. The Lord will know well how to feed His own. Let us go and pray." Thereupon he went into the church, and coming out at the end of a short time, he told the brethren to call the community into the refectory. They answered, "But, holy Father, how can you wish us to call them, as there is nothing to serve them with?" And they purposely delayed to do what he ordered them. Thereupon the Blessed Father sent for Fra Roggero the cellarer, and commanded him to assemble the brethren for dinner, because the Lord would provide for their wants. Then the cloths were laid, and the cups set out, and at a given

signal the whole convent entered the refectory. The Blessed Father pronounced the blessing, and all being seated, Fra Enrico the Roman began the reading. Meanwhile the Blessed Dominic was praying, with his hands clasped upon the table: and, lo! all at once, just as he had promised by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, two beautiful young men, ministers of Divine Providence, appeared in the midst of the refectory, carrying loaves in two white napkins, which hung from their shoulders before and behind. They began the distribution by the lower rows, one on the right, the other on the left, and set an entire loaf of admirable beauty before each brother. Then when they were come to Blessed Dominic, and had likewise placed before him a whole loaf, they bowed their heads and disappeared, without any one knowing to this day whither they went or whence they came. Blessed Dominic said to the brethren, "My brethren, eat the bread which the Lord hath sent you." Then he told the serving brothers to pour out the wine. But they replied, "Holy Father, there is none." Then the Blessed Father, full of the spirit of prophecy, said to them, "Go to the cask and pour out for the brethren the wine which the Lord hath sent them." They went, in fact, and found the cask filled to the brim with excellent wine, which they hastened to bring. And Blessed Dominic said, "Drink, my brethren, of the wine which the Lord hath sent you." Then they eat and drank as much as they would, that day, the next and the day after. But after the repast of the third day, he had all given to the poor that remained of the bread and wine, and

would not have any of it kept any longer in the house.”¹

The painter has been worthy of the writer: his pencil has given the original faithfully. The religious are seated in the refectory, in the order and recollection which gives something so grave and poetical to monastic repasts. S. Dominic is in the centre, his hands joined together, waiting for the good turn of Providence. Fra Enrico the Roman is reading, and Fra Roggero the cellarer is bringing, in a large wicker bottle, the wine which the Lord hath sent. The two angels, who have begun with the last, as is still the custom, are come before S. Dominic, and are going to lay upon the table the loaf designed for him. The whole of this scene is as calm and simple as the confidence of those who hope in the Lord.

The last picture represents the Death of S. Dominic. The holy Founder, sitting on his bed, is giving his blessing and last instructions to his religious. Before him, we read these words of his will, “Have charity, keep humility, possess voluntary poverty.” The painter, who had written them on the book S. Dominic is carrying in the upper picture, took delight in repeating them, because they were dear to the reformed convent of Fiesole. The children of the dying saint listen to him with love and veneration. Grief is depicted in different shades on the countenances of all. Two religious in particular cannot repress their sobs. In the upper part, is drawn the dream of Fra Gualo, prior of the convent of Brescia, who, at the moment when the

¹ *Vie de S. Dominique*, p. 415.—Narrative of Sister Cecilia, No. 3.

faint was giving his last sigh, saw two ladders reaching from earth to heaven: one was held by our Lord, the other by the most Holy Virgin, and angels were going up and down, playing glad instruments and bearing a beautiful crown. In the midst, two angels carried the luminous throne destined for the holy Patriarch. This vision does not injure the unity of the composition: it is sweetly blended with the azure sky.¹

The type of S. Dominic in these pictures comes up to the portrait Sister Cecilia has left us of him. "His stature," she says in her narrative, "was of middle size, his shape slender, his face fine and rather sanguine in its hue, his hair and beard fair and bright, and his eyes beautiful. There came out from his forehead and from between the eyelashes a certain radiant light, which attracted respect and love. He was always cheerful and agreeable, except when moved to compassion by some affliction of his neighbour. He had long and beautiful hands, and a powerful, noble and sonorous voice. He was never bald, and had his religious tonsure perfect, sprinkled with a few white hairs."²

We must not suppose, however, that Beato Angelico has adopted only one type. On the contrary, we have been struck with the diversity of face he has given to S. Dominic; and we conclude from it that, in his time, no traditional likeness of him existed. He chose amongst the religious around him those who

¹ This composition may be compared with the Death of S. Bruno, one of the finest scenes in the celebrated Gallery of Lesueur. Notwithstanding the merit of that picture, which displays an admirable effect of light, Beato Angelico's composition is more religious, more true and more learned.

² *Vie de Saint Dominique*, p. 432.

by their sanctity and dignity best represented the holy Founder to him, and gave them his name by placing above their head the star which characterizes him. Beato Angelico is one of those painters who have studied nature most. In his pictures, are found faces with such marked individuality, that it is evident they are portraits. But they were not common mercenary models which the artist chose; they were religious who understood the actions of the saints, and made their virtues live again. Beato Angelico put them in the scene, and did not make them groups of distracted spectators, as the painters of Renaissance did.



CHAPTER VI.

BEATO ANGELICO AS A THEOLOGIAN.—LIFE OF OUR LORD.



IF all the works executed by Beato Angelico during his abode at the convent of Fiesole, the most important is assuredly the Life of our Lord, in thirty-five pictures. Vafari tells us that it was painted for the chapel of the Nunciata at Florence, which Cofimo de Medici had built with such magnificence by his architect Michelozzi.¹ The paintings once formed the panels of a press intended for the treasures of the chapel; they are now in the Academy of Fine Arts.

Never has that great epopee of Christianity been represented with more learning and piety. Not only

¹ Nella cappella similmente della Nunciata di Firenze, che fece fare Piero di Cofimo de' Medici, dipinse gli sportelli dell' armario dove stanno l'argenterie, di figure piccole condotte con molta diligenza.

has Beato Angelico followed the traditions of the great school of Giotto, but he has himself drawn from the sources of Holy Scripture and of theology. This merit in our painter has not been sufficiently remarked by historians ; several have even supposed that he held a secondary rank in the Order of S. Dominic, and that he had put on only the humble habit of a lay-brother, in order to cultivate his art more readily. But the study of his life and works proves to us that he was a priest, and a priest, too, as remarkable for learning as for holiness. At first sight, the text is positive. The chronicle of the convent of Fiesole says, "In the year 1407, Fra Giovanni received the clerical habit in this convent, and made his profession in the following year."¹ He was amongst the choir-religious then, and must have made his theological studies along with his companions in the noviciate. His brother, who was an artist like himself, was certainly a priest, since he was nominated sub-prior of San Marco and prior of San Dominico of Fiesole, and fulfilled the duties of those offices, whilst executing the choral books which he enriched with such beautiful miniatures. Beato Angelico was a priest, since Pope Eugenius IV. wished to nominate him Archbishop of Florence. In the fifteenth century, they did not raise at once to the fulness of the priesthood one who was not already in orders ; and if the Sovereign Pontiff wished to place Beato Angelico in the see of

¹ Fr. Joannes Petri de Mugello, juxta Vichium, optimus pictor, qui multas tabulas et parietes in diversis locis pinxit, accepit habitum clericorum in hoc conventu . . . et sequenti anno fecit professionem. Beato Angelico is represented on his tomb in the choir-habit. Paul Delaroche has depicted him in a lay-brother's habit, in the hemicycle of the school of fine-arts.

Florence, before he seated S. Antoninus there on his recommendation, it was that he might receive the high dignity his humility made him refuse. The title of artist, which is given even to God, does not ill become a priest. In Christian antiquity, many religious and bishops have borne it with glory, and Greek tradition has put the pencil into the hand of S. Luke, who wrote the gospel.¹

Beato Angelico has also written the Life of Our Lord. The sacerdotal unction had prepared his hands, as the coal from the altar purified the lips of Isaias; and it is not surprising that the fingers which daily held the Body of the Holy Victim should have produced such pure masterpieces. Painting formed a part of his ministry. Charged to distribute the light of grace and truth to the faithful, he did it by presenting to them pictures, which converted and sanctified their hearts. These preachings of art have not lost their eloquence. At Florence, we have been told of Protestants who have come back to a religion capable of inspiring such paintings.

Our Beato strengthened his talent by theological studies. His pictures evince fruitful meditation and profound intelligence of the Holy Scriptures. He borrows numerous texts from them to complete his thought and express his sentiments better. We be-

¹ In the middle ages, the Latin Church did not believe that S. Luke was a painter. S. Thomas Aquinas, in his *Catena Aurea*, and Blessed James de Voragine, in his *Legenda Aurea*, give to this Evangelist the title of physician, after the Epistle of S. Paul: *Salutat vos Lucas, medicus carissimus* (Coloss. iv. 14). The numerous Greek Madonnas attributed, in Italy, to S. Luke are by different painters, and of various epochs. The one in Santa Maria Maggiore, which we were able to examine very close, appeared to us the most ancient. We believe it to be contemporary with the paintings of Santa Sophia at Constantinople.

lieve we can recognize traces of his studies in the two little panels preserved in the Academy of Fine Arts at Florence. In them, he has painted the two great glories of the Dominican Order, Bleffed Albert the Great and the Angelic Doctör S. Thomas Aquinas. The panels, in a femi-circle terminated by scrolls, were doubtless placed over the doors or pulpits of the halls used for teaching philosophy and theology. The first represents Albert the Great furrounded by his numerous disciples, religious and laymen; and at his feet is read this inscription:—Bleffed Albert the Great, BEATV. ALBERTVS MANGNVS [*sic*].¹ In the scrolls, is seen, on the left, a figure holding a sphere, *astrology*, ASTROLOGIA; on the right, a figure holding two serpents attempting to bite each other, *logic*, LOICHA. This personification of logic is found on several of our monuments.

In the second panel, S. Thomas Aquinas is teaching theology; at his feet, three personages are overthrown, pointed out by their names, VILIELMV. AVERROIS. SABELLIVS, William de Saint-Amour, Averroës and Sabellius, representing the three great heresies victoriously combatted by S. Thomas. In the scrolls, on the left, a figure holding an eagle, and on a banderole, THEOLOGIA SPECVLATIVA; on the right, a figure holding a globe, THEOLOGIA PRATICA.

These two pictures show us the whole of the sciences of the middle ages, and the happy agreement between reason and faith. Astrology, in its ancient signification, indicates the knowledge of natural causes; and

¹ This mis-spelling appears in other pictures, and indicates, perhaps, a pronunciation at that period.

logic, the knowledge of the intellectual powers, the use of which it directs. Albert the Great unveils the secrets of the visible and invisible world; but his more illustrious pupil, S. Thomas Aquinas, whose reason is enlightened by superior light, rises into the regions of faith, and contemplates by speculative theology the splendours of the infinite, afterwards to follow its rays, which come down upon things and acts of life by means of practical theology.

Theological science, in which, by a sublime prodigy, the mind of man is united to the mind of God, is the focus where all the rays of light converge, coming either directly or indirectly from the First Cause. Distinct from the other sciences, of which it is the judge and queen, it exceeds them in its beginning, object, certainty, and its aim, which is the perfection of man and his eternal happiness.¹ It embraces the past, present and future, and lights up the triple face of time, by showing us under the literal sense of the revealed word, the allegorical, moral and anagogical senses; that is, the teachings of faith, the rules of virtue, and the promise of its rewards.

Theology is also the queen of the arts; for, with the knowledge of the truth, it gives the love for it: the light of faith gives birth to the ardour of charity. By theology, the heart goes higher than the understanding. When the mind is fixed in the obscurity of a mystery, the heart leaps forward still, attaches itself to the unknown, and dilates in the infinite. It is imagined that theology is a stern science, and that its only part is to fill the pulpits of the

¹ Summa Theol., 1, q. 2, 3, 4.

schools and the columns of folios with fyllogisms. But theology is the inspirer and most faithful friend of Christian art. It has given to art its symbolism ; it has traced the plan of the cathedrals ; it has guided the hand of sculptors and of painters, and has revealed to them, by the commentaries of the holy fathers, the poetry of the Bible and the sublimity of the Gospel.

In proving that Beato Angelico was a theologian, and more of a theologian than any of the artists who have preceded or followed him, we make known one of the sources of his genius, one of the causes of his glory. Not only did he receive the inspirations of theology by artistic tradition, of which he was the faithful disciple, but he appropriated its lights by special and profound studies. He has given proofs of it in painting the Life of our Lord, and has understood all its historical and dogmatic grandeur. The life of our Lord is the key of history, the centre of time and eternity, the highest and most complete manifestation of truth.

Beato Angelico has known how to show us the Word, the Son of God playing in the creation,¹ announcing Himself by the prophets, becoming incarnate to save us, dying on the Cross, leaving us His life and teachings, and coming at the end of ages to reward and punish according to each one's works ; and he has painted these subjects with his eyes fixed on the two Testaments, of which Christ is the inspirer and the hero. Each subject has a double text giving the meaning of it.

As a prologue to his poem, Beato Angelico has

¹ *Prov.* viii, 30.—[TRANSLATOR'S note]

painted the vision which begins the prophecies of Ezechiel, and he explains it by the magnificent commentaries of S. Gregory the Great. On the banks of the river Chobar, Ezechiel contemplates the symbolical wheel. Opposite him, the Pope, S. Gregory, meditates on it and writes the explanation. In the corners above their heads, great parchments are unrolled, whereon some passages of their texts are read.

Above Ezechiel :—" And I saw, and behold a whirlwind came out of the north ; and a great cloud, and a fire enfolding it. . . . And now as I beheld the living creatures, there appeared upon the earth by the living creatures one wheel with four faces. And their appearance and their work was, as it were, a wheel in the midst of a wheel."¹

Above S. Gregory :—" What is it that, when one wheel is spoken of, it is added shortly after, ' as it were a wheel in the midst of a wheel,' except that, in the letter of the Old Testament, the New Testament lay hid in allegory? Whence, also, the same wheel that appeared near the living creatures is described as having four faces, because sacred Scripture, by both Testaments, is divided into four parts, the Old Testament into the law and prophets, the New into the Gospel and into the acts and sayings of the Apostles."²

¹ Et vidi, et ecce ventus turbinis veniebat ab aquilone, et nubes magna et ignis (*hic*) involvens . . . Cumque aspicerem animalia, apparuit rota una super terram, juxta animalia, habens quatuor facies. . . . Et aspectus eorum et opera, quasi si fit rota in medio rotæ. (EZECHIEL, ch. i., v. 4, 15, 16.)

² Quid est hoc, quod cum una rota diceretur, paulo post adjungitur : Quasi si fit rota in medio rotæ, nisi quod in Testamenti Veteris littera, Testamentum Novum latuit per allegoriam? Unde et rota eadem, quæ juxta animalia apparuit, quatuor facies habere describitur, quia Scriptura sacra per utraque Testamenta in quatuor partibus est distincta. Vetus etenim Testamentum in lege et prophetis, Novum vero in Evangelii atque apostolorum actibus et dictis.

This passage is taken from the beautiful homilies of S. Gregory the Great, explaining the vision of Ezechiel by the coming of our Saviour and by the spread of the holy Gospel, which he relates by employing the figures of the prophet. At the time of the Incarnation, he says, the whirlwind came from the north ; the breath of the evil spirit was ravaging the world ; the great cloud of idolatry blinded men ; and the fire of persecution encompassed truth. Light then spread ; in the midst, was, as it were, a metal composed of gold and silver, of justice and mercy : the gold of the Divine nature was united with the silver of the human nature in the person of our Saviour. In the midst, also, was the image of the four living creatures resembling the Son of Man ; for the Evangelists have imitated our Lord in all things. They have four faces and four wings, for they all say the same thing, and their flight tends to the same perfection. Their way is straight forwards, and their feet are like those of the ox, the symbol of strength and discretion, and sparks of truth go out of them like glowing bras. The hand of the Man-God makes itself felt by the ardour of their zeal in the four quarters of the world, and they carry to them the same testimony of words and virtues. They do not recoil before any obstacle, and always advance towards things eternal. They resemble man by reason, the ox by sacrifice, the lion by courage, and the eagle by the flight of contemplation. They triumph on the right and on the left, in prosperity as well as in adversity, because they know how to soar above the things of earth. The two wings of their soul are love and hope ; and the two wings of their body, fear and penance. They

go whither the breath of the Holy Ghost carries them. They are like burning coals of fire, like burning lamps; and they shed everywhere the flames of love and the light of truth. They go and come like the thunder-clap, and scatter Holy Scripture everywhere. Holy Scripture is like a wheel with four sides: the law, the prophets, the Gospel and the words of the Apostles; and this wheel is double, for the New Testament is the centre to which the Old converges. Holy Scripture is like the sea by its extent and depth, and by it we may arrive, upheld by the sacred Tree of the Cross, at the heavenly country.¹

This beautiful commentary developed in the first homilies of S. Gregory on Ezechiel, must naturally have been familiar to a religious of the Order charged to continue the mission of the Apostles. Beato Angelico was very capable of understanding and loving the genius of that great saint, the most perfect representative of the papacy in its social action. In the person of S. Gregory the Great, Providence inaugurated the temporal power of the sovereign pontiffs, which was to be the centre of progress and civilization during all the middle ages. Sprung from ancient patrician families, he was invested with the first magistracy of Rome by the Emperor Justinus. And when the acclamations of the whole people had seated him, in spite of himself, upon the pontifical throne, he became the light of the Church and the saviour of Italy, which he defended against the corruption of Byzantium and the violence of the Lombards. No pope was more zealous in sending mis-

¹ SANCTI GREGORII PAPÆ Opera omnia, è Congr. S. Mauri, 1705; tom. i, lib. i, Hom. 2, 3 et seq.

naries to the barbarians, in creating schools, in founding hospitals, and in maintaining ecclesiastical discipline, the code of which he digested in his *Pastoral*. He was also the legislator of Christian art, by regulating the liturgy, its most divine and living part. An artist himself, he composed hymns, and gave to the faithful the Gregorian chant, that precious fragment of the ancient melodies. His works excel in poetry, and his *Dialogues* have been the most fruitful source of our marvellous legends. He protected particularly painting, and the artists of his time took pleasure in multiplying his portrait. They represented him as receiving the inspirations of the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove.

Let us see how Beato Angelico has translated the commentary of S. Gregory with his pencil. Around two concentric wheels representing the Old and New Testament, are written the beginning of Genesis and of the Gospel of S. John.

The creation is the first manifestation of the Son of God. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said: Be light made. And light was made. And God saw the light that it was good: and He divided the light from the darkness. And He called the light Day."¹

The Incarnation is the second manifestation of the

¹ In giving the inscriptions on the pictures by Beato Angelico, we shall adhere to the orthography. We will occasionally correct the texts in italics.

In principio creavit Deus cœlum et terram. Terra aut. erat innanis et vacua et tenebræ erant super faciem abissi et Spiritus Dni ferebatur super aquas dixitq. Deus fiat lux et facta est lux et vidit Deus lucem q. esset bona et divisit ucem ac tenebras (à tenebris) appellavitq. lucem diem.

Word. The Evangelist relates His eternal generation. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made."¹

On this account, all the spokes of the two wheels, like all the events of the Old and New Testament, end in one only centre, the Man-God, whose double nature is represented by the union of gold and silver in a single metal. The outer wheel representing the Old Testament is divided into twelve compartments. In the highest, is seated Moses, his brow armed with the reflections of the Divine light, holding the two tables of Sinai in his hands. On his right and left, are sitting David and Solomon, and next them Isaac, Ezechiel, Daniel, Jeremias, Esdras, Micheas, Malachias, Jonas and Joel. These personages are not only the historians of our Lord, but also types of Him: their very names have a prophetic signification not unknown to art in the middle ages.²

DAVID REX. David (*dilectus*) the well-beloved fits on the right hand of Moses, as the well-beloved Son of God is fitting on the right hand of His Father. He represents the prophets. His eyes are fixed on heaven, in which he is saluting his Lord, the inheritor of his race: and his hands accompany his songs on the psaltery.

On the other side, SOLOMON (*pacificus*), the peaceful

¹ In principio erat verbum et verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipsum factu. est nichil.

² See the explanation of the names of the forefathers of Christ, in the *Catena aurea*, chap. i of S. Matthew.

king, who holds the sword and the book of the law. Forefather of Him who is to make all nations at peace by the sword of the word and by the sweetness of the Gospel, Solomon celebrates the nuptials of Christ and the Church.

ISAAC (*risus*), the laughter of Abraham, who is ready to sacrifice him upon the mountain. His attitude expresses ecstasy. He rejoices because all nations are to be blessed in his posterity.

The other prophets hold phylacteries in their hands, to indicate the texts relating to the Saviour.

EZECHIEL (*fortitudo Dei*), the strength of God. He announces Him who is to reign over the nations, and the only Pastor who is to lead them.

DANIEL (*judicium Dei*), the judgment of God. He delivers truth from the hands of falsehood, and indicates the day and hour when justice and peace will embrace upon Calvary.

JEREMIAS (*celsitudo Domini*), the highness of the Lord. He laments over the sufferings of the Passion, and shows Him who will draw all things to Himself, when He shall be lifted up on the Tree of the Cross.

ESDRAS (*adjutor*), the helper. He is the support and light of the captivity, and teaches the faithful the law and divine worship.

MICHEAS (*quis sicut Deus*), who as God. Micheas sees in the Child of Bethlehem, the Ruler of Israel, the God gone forth from the days of eternity.

MALACHIAS (*nuncius meus*), my messenger. Malachias, the prophet of the forerunners of Christ, announces S. John Baptist before the Incarnation, and the prophet Elias before the last judgment.

JONAS (*columba*), the dove of the deluge, the symbol of the resurrection. He holds in his hand the fish by which he became the sign of the Saviour.

JOEL (*volens, incipiens*), willing, beginning. He celebrates the power of the Name of Jesus invoked over the whole earth, and the triumph of His law in the valley of Josaphat.

All these prophets, who have written and represented the life of our Saviour, are seated on the ground and surrounded by flowers and trees, because they lived amidst fleeting images and the shadows of the Old Testament, whilst the historians of the New Testament are standing and in the pure light of truth.

The wheel of the New Testament is divided into eight compartments. The four Evangelists form a cross, the intervening spaces of which are filled with the Apostles who wrote the epistles. S. John, like Moses, is at the top, S. Matthew on his right, S. Mark on his left, and S. Luke at his feet. They hold the book of their Gospel open, and are represented with the symbolical heads of the vision of Ezechiel. This personification of the Evangelists is found on a great number of monuments: and the explanation of it given by S. Gregory the Great has been adopted by all the theologians and artists of the middle ages. We will quote it in full, in order to understand what light the Church has elicited from the letter of Sacred Scripture.¹

“These four-winged living creatures,” says S. Gregory, “designate the four holy Evangelists, as the very beginnings of the evangelical books evidence. For as

¹ See the learned dissertation of Mde. Félicie d’Ayza on this subject. *Annales Archéologiques*, 1847-1848.

Matthew began from Christ's human generation, he is rightly represented by the man; as Mark has begun by the voice crying in the desert, he is well represented by the lion; as Luke proceeds from sacrifice, he is well represented by the calf; and as John began from the divinity of the Word, the eagle worthily symbolizes him, who says, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Whilst he contemplated the very substance of the Divinity, he fixed his eyes, as the black eagle's, on the sun."

These four symbols also represent the Saviour. "For the only-begotten Son of God Himself was truly made man. In the sacrifices of our redemption, He deigned to die like the calf; by virtue of His strength, He rose again like the lion. The lion is also accounted to sleep with open eyes: for in that death, in which by His humanity our Redeemer could be sleeping, by His divinity He was watching by remaining immortal. Also after His resurrection, ascending to heaven, He was raised above, like the eagle. To us, therefore, He has become, at once, the man by being born, the calf by dying, the lion by rising again, and the eagle by going up to heaven."

But Christ is the chief of the elect, and all the elect must be like their Head. "Therefore, every elect and perfect in the way of God is at once the man, the calf, the lion and the eagle. For man is a rational living creature; the calf is usually offered in sacrifice; the lion is a strong beast, as it is written, 'A lion, the strongest of beasts, hath no fear of anything he meeteth.' The eagle flies up into the air and turns to the sun-

beams with unquailing eyes. Every one, therefore, who is perfect in reason, is the man. And as he mortifies himself in worldly pleasure, he is the calf. When by his own voluntary mortification he has the strength of security against all adversity, as it is written, 'The just man, bold as a lion, shall be without dread,' he is the lion. As he sublimely contemplates heavenly and earthly things, he is the eagle. Therefore, as the just man is by his reason man, by the sacrifice of his mortification the calf, by the strength of security the lion, and by contemplation becomes the eagle, so by these sacred living creatures every one perfect may be rightly typified."¹

Such are the principal ideas Beato Angelico has recalled, by giving the commentary of S. Gregory in this first picture of the Life of our Lord. The twenty-two figures which it contains are in noble style; the prophets especially, representing the Old Testament, may be compared, for style and draperies, with the finest statues adorning our cathedrals.

The pictures following represent the Life of our Lord. Each subject is accompanied by a verse from the Old and New Testament, which explains the idea of the artist.

The Incarnation. "Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel." "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus."²

¹ S. GREGORII Opera, lib. ii, Hom. 3, p. 1200.

² Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel.—*Isaias*, vii, 14.

Ecce concipies in utero et paries filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Ihesum.—*S Luke*, i, 31.

The angel and the Blessed Virgin are kneeling, to treat together of the great affair of our salvation. Mary has come down from a little stool before her, as if to lower herself still more, and bows down whilst styling herself the handmaid of the Lord. The Holy Ghost hovers over the composition. The scene takes place in the middle of a rich porch, at the back of which is opened the avenue of a beautiful garden. The architecture already no longer presents the simple and graceful notions of the first pictures by Beato Angelico: it recalls the classic taste and magnificence of the Medici.

The Nativity. "A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder." "Her days were accomplished that she should be delivered, and she brought forth her first-born Son."¹

He, in whose Name every knee must bow, is laid upon the ground, in front of a rustic and ruinous stable; and has nothing to cover him. He extends his arms, to offer himself already in sacrifice. Mary and Joseph adore him in silence. Behind him, the ass and ox are kneeling, according to the legend, and warm him with their breath. Over the thatched roof of the stable, six angels chant the *Gloria in excelsis*. On the left, are seen the shepherds, hastening on with devotion. The school of Perugino seems to have been often inspired by this composition.

The Circumcision. "Be circumcised to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of

¹ *Parvulus enim natus est nobis . . . et factus est principatus sup. humeru. ej.*
—*Isaias*, ix, 6.

Impleti sunt dies ut pareret, et peperit filium suum primogenitum.—*S. Luke*, ii. 6.

Juda.” “And after eight days were accomplished that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus.”¹

A little table covered with a worked cloth, and a gold dish represent the altar, upon which the Saviour is to offer the first fruits of his blood. The priest advances to shed it. The Child Jesus has his eyes and hands raised to heaven. Mary and Joseph are associated with his sacrifice by holding him; but the Virgin mother turns her head away. Behind the priest, are three persons, who seem to be waiting upon him. The building in which the scene passes is like a church; the lancet windows and the vaults of pointed arches supported by fluted pilasters indicate the transition that showed itself at Florence in the beginning of the fifteenth century.

The Adoration of the Magi. “The kings of Tharfis and the islands shall offer presents: the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts.” “And opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts; gold, frankincense and myrrh.”²

This composition is very fine. The Holy Virgin is seated in the centre; her figure stands out from the hut of Bethlehem as it were from the drapery of a throne, and is admirable for dignity and purity. The Child Jesus sitting on his mother’s knees blesses the king

¹ Circumcidimini Domino, viri Juda, et auferte præputia cordium vestrum —Jeremias, iv. 4.

Postquam consummati sunt dies octo ut circumcideretur puer, vocatum est nomen ejus Ihesum.—*S. Luke*, ii, 21.

² Reges Tharfis et insulæ munera offerent; reges Arabum et Sabba dona adducent.—*Ps. lxxi*, 10.

Et appertis thesauris obtulerunt ei *munera* thus et mirram.—*S. Matt.*, ii, 11.

prostrated to embrace his feet. The young king bearing the gold vase is very elegant. On the right of the Blessed Virgin, is seen the retinue of Orientals. The nearest respectfully contemplate the scene; the more distant are looking at, and pointing out, the star which has guided them. On the left, S. Joseph is discoursing with one of the kings.

The Purification. "Presently the Lord whom you seek, and the Angel of the Testament whom you desire shall come to His temple." "They carried Jesus to Jerusalem, to offer a sacrifice for Him."¹

The Ruler of the nations is straitly confined in his swaddling clothes. The Holy Virgin is giving him into the hands of the aged Simeon, who lovingly contemplates and adores the Salvation and Glory of Israel. Behind the Blessed Virgin, S. Joseph comes up carrying two little doves in a basket. On the opposite side, the prophetess Anna is advancing, with clasped hands. This figure is admirable, and is worthy of Raphael.

The Flight into Egypt. "I have gone far off flying away, and I abode in the wilderness." "Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt."²

The Virgin is going away, sitting on an ass; she tenderly presses the Child Jesus in her arms. S. Joseph follows on foot, with his poor provision for the journey; he holds, in his left hand, a stone bottle, with a staff and

¹ Statim veniet ad templum sanctum suum dominator (dominus) quem vos queritis et angelus (est) testamenti quem vos vultis.—*Malachi*, iii, 1.

Tulerunt Ihesum in Jerusalem ut darent ostiam pro eo. (An inexact quotation; see S. Luke, ii, 22-24).

² Elongavi fugiens: et mansi in solitudine.—*Ps.*, liv, 8

Surge, et accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Egyptum.—*S. Matt.*, ii, 13.

his cloak on the end of it; and in his right, a small round basket. This composition reminds us of Taddeo Gaddi's, in Santa Croce, at Florence.

The Massacre of the Innocents. "They have done unjustly against the children of Juda, and have shed innocent blood in their land." "And Herod was exceeding angry, and sending killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem."¹

This is a very remarkable composition. Herod orders the massacre from the top of a terrace of his palace. A troop of soldiers pursues the weeping mothers. The tears and cries of the inconsolable Rachel are given with an inspiration and intensity of expression seemingly incompatible with Beato Angelico's sweet and contemplative soul. It is true, the executioners do not appear to be furious; but the despair of the mothers is shown by the truest and most varied movements. Two women, in the foreground, are senseless with grief. Their children are dead, and they take no more notice of the scene of slaughter around them; one is lying on the body of her son; and the other contemplates her child extended on her knees; whilst another tears the face of a soldier with her nails. The most distant fly, whilst pressing the objects of their tenderness to their bosoms. One of them seems to hope to save him; her profile recalls the one we have admired in the Coronation of the Virgin and in the raising of the young Napoleone to life. All these female heads are drawn and modelled with rare perfection.

¹ Ineque egerunt in filios Juda, et effuderunt sanguinem innocentem in terra sua.—*Joel*, iii, 19.

Iratu est valde (Herodes) et mittens occidit omnes pueros qui erant in Bethlehem.—*S. Matt.*, ii, 16.

Jesus in the midst of the Doctors. “The wise men are confounded, they are dismayed and taken. There is no wisdom in them.” “They found Him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions.”¹

This composition is full of quiet and sweetness. He who confounds human wisdom is sitting in the centre. His heavenly look appears to contemplate truth in the bosom of his Father. The doctor on his right has sought to answer him: his book is open on his knees but his gesture expresses surprise and embarrassment. The one on his left has humbly closed his book, and listens with compunction and veneration. The countenances of the others express various feelings. The Holy Virgin and S. Joseph are respectfully advancing.

The Baptism. “He went down, and washed in the Jordan seven times.” “Jesus came and was baptized by John in the Jordan.”²

The Marriage in Cana. “You shall take of the river-water, and it shall be turned into blood.” “The voice of the Lord hath thundered upon the waters.”³

The Transfiguration. “And the house was filled with the glory of the Lord.” “And He was transfigured before them.”⁴

¹ Confusi sunt sapientes, perterriti et capti sunt . . . Sapientia nulla est in eis.—*Jeremias*, viii, 9.

Invenerunt eum in templo sedentem in medio doctorum, audientem illos et interrogantes eos.—*S. Luke*, ii, 46.

² Descendit et lavit septies in Jordane.—*4 Kings*, v, 14.

Venit Jesus et baptizatus est à Johane in Jordane.—*S. Mark*, i, 9.

³ Haurietis aquam . . . et vertetur in sanguinem.—*Exod.*, iv, 9.

Vox Domini intonuit super aquas.—*Ps.*, xxviii, 3.

⁴ Et repleta erat gloria domus Domini.—*Ezech.*, xliii, 5.

Tras fighuratus est ante eos.—*S. Matt.*, xvii, 2.

These three pictures are not by Beato Angelico, and we do not know how to explain their presence amongst the others. Perhaps the originals had been accidentally destroyed, and some artist of very inferior talent wanted to replace them; but he has ill succeeded, for his figures do not approach our painter's, neither in style nor in execution. These three pictures on the same panel are besides almost effaced.

The Raising of Lazarus to Life. "I will bring you out of your sepulchres, O my people." "Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth."¹

This composition recalls the fresco of Buffalmacco in San Francesco, at Assisi. Lazarus is standing, with his hands still bandaged. Those who have taken away the stone recoil on perceiving the corruption of the tomb. Martha and Mary are kneeling at the Saviour's feet. Their countenances express at once both grief and hope. Christ, at the head of his apostles, looks kindly on his friend Lazarus.

The Entry into Jerusalem. "Behold thy King cometh to thee meek, sitting upon an ass and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke." "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."²

That King, full of meekness, comes to take posses-

¹ Educam vos de sepulcris populus meus.—*Ezech.*, xxxvii, 12.

Clamavit Jhs voce magna: Lazare, veni foras. Et statim prodiit qui erat mortuus.—*S. John*, xi, 43.

² Ecce rex tuus venit tibi . . . mansuetus sedens super asinam et filium subjugalem.—Inexact; see *Zach.*, ix, 9. [It is exact from *S. Matt.*, xxi, 5.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

Hosanna filio David, benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.—*S. Matt.* xxi, 9.

fion of his empire on the heights of Calvary. He is crossing the Mount of Olives, which is to be the witness of his agony, and he blesses the faithful band accompanying him. As yet we see neither Jerusalem nor the enthusiastic and fickle crowd. Only a few disciples and the college of the Apostles, holding branches, follow him. This march in solitude has something sad and solemn in it.

The Betrayal by Judas. "And they weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver." "What will you give me and I will deliver Him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver."¹

The history of our Saviour's Passion begins with the treason of Judas. The bargain has just been concluded, and Judas, before going away, stretches out his hand, into which the price of his crime is being counted. This composition is distinguished amongst all the others, by the grandeur and simplicity of the lines. The physiognomy and gestures of the personages are very expressive, and the type of Judas is quite that of the avaricious and treacherous man. The building that serves as a background for the picture seems copied from the baptistry at Florence.

The Last Supper. "A lamb of the same year without blemish he shall offer." "And they made ready the pasch. And when the hour was come, Jesus sat down and the twelve disciples with Him."²

¹ Appenderunt mercedem meam triginta argenteos.—*Zach.*, xi., 12.

Quid vultis dare mihi et ego vobis tradam illum. At illi constituerunt ei xxx argenteos.—*S. Matt.*, xxvi, 15.

² Agnum ejusdem anni immaculatum faciet sacrificium (*holocaustum*).—*Ezech.*, xlvi, 13.

Paraverunt pascha. Et cum facta esset hora discubuit (Jhs) et duodecim discipuli (*apostoli*).—*S. Luke*, xxii, 13.

The moment chosen by the painter is when our Lord announces to the Apostles that one of them will betray Him. This picture is inferior to the others. Judas, who betrays himself by putting out his hand to the dish, has not the type which we have just noticed.

The Washing of the Feet. "Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices." "He putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples, and to wipe them with the towel."¹

The scene takes place under a gallery surrounding a little court planted with trees and turf. The Apostles are attentive and recollected. Our Lord is kneeling before S. Peter, who withdraws his feet, whilst he looks on his Master with respectful adoration. The group is a masterpiece. Never, perhaps, has the text of the Gospel been more admirably given.

The Institution of the Holy Eucharist. "I will flay for you a great victim upon the mountains of Israel, to eat flesh and drink blood." "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life."²

Our Lord is giving communion, as a priest, to the Apostles on their knees. This is one of the occasions in which mystic truth may put on historical truth. The provision for the repast must disappear amidst so great a mystery; and Nicolas Poussin had a more Christian inspiration, when he represented the

¹ Levamini, mundi estote, auferte malum cogitationum vestrarum.—*Isaias*, i, 16.

Misit aquam in pelvim et cepit levare pedes discipulorum et extergere linteo.—*S. John*, xiii, 5.

² Ego imolabo vobis victimam grandem super montem *Israel* ut comedatis carnes et bibatis sanguinem.—*Ezech.*, xxxix, 17.

Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem habet vitam eternam.—*S. John*, vi, 55.

institution of the Holy Eucharist after Beato Angelico, than when, in his Seven Sacraments, he fought to show his talent by the luxury of an ancient supper.

Jesus in the Garden of Olives. "Fear not, for I am with thee: I am Thy God. I have strengthened thee." "And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him."¹

The apparition of the angel presenting the chalice to our Lord at prayer is a design from the school of Giotto. But the posture of the three Apostles asleep on the foreground is remarkable for its originality. It is seen that they wanted to watch, but that sleep has overcome them. S. Peter is sitting in front, with his forehead supported and hidden by his hand.

The Kiss of Judas. "He who ate my bread hath greatly supplanted me." "And Judas forthwith coming to Jesus, said, Hail, Rabbi. And he kissed Him."²

The principal group is very beautiful. The hypocrisy of Judas contrasts with the calmness and sorrow of Jesus, who weeps for him whom he would even still call his friend. The soldiers and the Jews overturned on his left somewhat injure the unity of the subject.

Jesus is Bound. "Behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and they shall bind thee with them." "But they holding Jesus led Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest."³

¹ Ne timeas quia ego tecum sum Ego Deus tuus confortavi te.—*Isaias* xli, 10.

Apparuit autem ei angelus de cœlo, confortans eum.—*S. Luke*, xxii, 43.

² Qui edebat panes meos, magnificavit super me supplantationes.—*Ps.*, xl, 10.
Et confestim accedens (Judas) ad xpm dixit ave rabbi et osculatus est eum —
S. Matt., xxvi, 49.

³ Ecce data sunt super te vincula, et ligabunt te in eis.—*Ezech.*, iii, 25.

Beato Angelico does not excel in representing scenes of violence. The figure of our Lord always remains calm and dignified. The foldiers surrounding him are well drawn, but execute without emotion the mission they are charged with. In the foreground, S. Peter, armed with a not very dreadful sword, cuts off the ear of the overturned Malchus.

Jesus is treated ignominiously. "I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spat upon Me." "And they mocked Him and struck Him. And they blindfolded Him."¹

This composition, imitated from Giotto's, is very beautiful. The servants of the high priest insult our Lord, pull his hair and spit in his face. Jesus, motionless on his throne of derision, holds in one hand a reed for a sceptre, and in the other the globe of the world. The bandage covering his eyes is transparent, and allows his look to be seen full of meekness and patience. Does not this admirable figure well represent Him, who is the truth, sitting in the midst of ages, receiving the insults of error and the gross outrages of vice; seeing all, suffering all, because He awaits the tears of penitence or the justice of eternity? In a corner of the picture, is painted the Denial of S. Peter.

Jesus before the High Priest. "They shall strike the cheek of the Judge of Israel." "One of the officers

At illi tenentes Jhm duxerunt eum ligatum ad Chaipham principem Judeorum.
S. Matt., xxvi, 57.

¹ Faciem meam non averti ab increpantibus et conspuentibus in me.—*Isaias*, l. 6.
Illudebant ei cædentes. Et velaverunt faciem ejus.—*S. Luke*, xxii, 63.

standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?"¹

Our Lord is standing before the tribunal of the high priest. Around his neck is a noose, and a soldier holds the end of the cord. Behind him is the servant, who is going to strike him. The judge and the false witnesses surrounding him are well drawn and well draped.

The Scourging. "I am ready for scourges, and My sorrow is continually before Me." "Then therefore Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him."²

This scene is painted with piety and compassion. Beato Angelico seems to have heard from the mouth of our Lord the Psalm of David, and to have applied it to himself. He must have shed many tears in thus representing Him who had suffered for him, and his grief was very truly before his eyes, as it was in his heart. Nothing is more simple and affecting than this composition. Jesus is bound to the pillar. Two executioners hold the cord binding him, with one hand, and with the other strike him with rods. Our Lord casts upon the one on his left a sweet deep look, which ought to convert him.

Jesus carries His Cross. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter." "And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place, which is called Calvary."³

¹ Percutient maxillam judicis Israel.—*Micheas*, v, 1.

Unus assistens ministrorum dedit alapam Jhu dicens: Sic respondes pontifici?—*S. John*, xviii, 22.

² Ego in flagella paratus sum, et dolor meus in conspectu (tuo) meo semper.—*Ps.* xxxvii, 18.

Tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jhm et flagellavit eum.—*S. John*, xix, 1.

³ Tanquam ovis ad occisionem ductus est.—*Isaias*, liii, 7.

There is much movement and grandeur in this scene. Those who go first are entering upon the mountain-roads, whilst those who close the train are still at the gates of the city. Jesus follows the two enchained thieves. He turns his head to look at his mother, whose grief weighs on him more than his Cross. A soldier menacingly repulses Mary, who, weeping, follows the footprints of her Son. The lines and drapery of this figure are as beautiful as the expression. The holy women who accompany him are also very remarkable. One of them is turning as if to ask a favour from the Roman officer.

Jesus is stripped of His garments. "They parted My garments amongst them; and upon My vesture they cast lots." "The soldiers divided His garments, casting lots."¹

This subject is represented in an unusual manner: nothing in it indicates Calvary and the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. On the contrary, the scene is commanded by high mountains furnished with towns and fortified castles. The holy women who accompanied our Saviour are absent, the Cross and the two thieves have disappeared. Christ is surrounded only by the soldiers, who are stripping him, and two of them are playing at dice for his seamless coat. Has not Beato Angelico had some particular intention, and may we not see in this picture a memorial of the events he had witnessed and been the victim of, when he was

Bajulans xps sibi crucem exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvariae locum.—*S. John*, xix, 17.

¹ Diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea, et super vestem meam miserunt sortem.—*Ps.* xxi, 19.

Diviserunt (milites) vestimenta ejus, sortem mittentes.—*S. Matt.*, xxvi, 35.

obliged to abandon the convent of Fiesole? Does not Christ naked represent the Church stripped by schism and heresy? And the two soldiers disputing for the coat without seam, are they not the two competitors of Gregory XII, who want to invest themselves with the papacy?

The Crucifixion. "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins." "And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him there."¹

This picture is a prayer at the foot of the Cross. The sacrifice is consummated: the open side of our Lord has even poured out water and blood, to prove to us his inexhaustible love. The new Adam seems to awake and contemplate the spouse taken from his breast during his sleep. His eyes are opened upon the Church, which is before him. His executioners are converted; the centurion confesses his divinity; he who had given him gall and vinegar to drink raises towards him eyes full of repentance and love. The soldiers are on their knees, and Longinus, still holding the lance with which he struck him, gathers up the precious blood that restored his sight. On the right, S. John and the holy women support the Mother of Grief, who swoons away. This group is as beautiful as the chant of the *Stabat*.

The Burial. "Him the Gentiles shall beseech, and His sepulchre shall be glorious." "Joseph wrapped the

¹ Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, et attritus est propter scelera nostra.—*Isaias*, liii, 5.

Postquam venerunt in locum qui dicitur Calvarie, ibi crucifixerunt eum.—*S. Luke*, xxiii, 33

body of Jesus in fine linen, and laid Him in a sepulchre.”¹

The persons who are burying the Saviour pay him their last homage. We shall find the same composition again in one of Beato Angelico’s masterpieces, in the Academy at Florence.

The Descent into Hell. “He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their bonds asunder.” “Thou hast redeemed us to God in Thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people.”²

Jesus enters* triumphant into limbo. The gate of hell has fallen upon the demon, who kept the key of it. The patriarchs hasten towards their Redeemer; Adam and Eve stretch out their hands to him. Behind them, are advancing the innocent Abel, Noe with the model of the ark in his hands, Abraham holding the knife of sacrifice like a palm, David and the prophets. In the corner of the picture, are seen two scenes of hell: demons fighting with a club and a trident, and a hideous monster squeezing a woman in his arms, as a punishment, no doubt, for her voluptuousness. This picture leaves much to be desired in the drawing; for the figures are heavy and ill-proportioned.

The Holy Women at the Sepulchre. “I rose up and

¹ Ipsæ gentes deprecabuntur, et erit sepulchrum ejus gloriosum.—*Isaias*, xi, 10.
Joseph depositum corpus JHV, involvit in sindone, et posuit eum in monumento.
—*S. Luke*, xxiii, 53.

² Eduxit eos de tenebris et umbra mortis, et vincula eorum dirupit.—*Ps.* cvi, 14.
Redemisti nos Deus (*Deo*) in sanguine tuo, ex omni tribu linguarum et populorum.—*Apocal.*, v, 9.

am still with thee." "You seek Jesus of Nazareth; He is risen, He is not here."¹

The angel who speaks to the holy women is sitting upon the stone where the Saviour's body lay. Two young women stoop down to look into the interior of the grotto. The three Marys are retiring: their attire, by its nobleness, reminds us of that of the Saints admired in the Paradise of Orcagna, at Santa Maria Novella.

The Ascension. "He ascended above the heavens, and He flew upon the wings of the wind." "And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven."²

In the upper part of the painting, is seen nothing but the bottom of our Lord's garment, and the luminous circle surrounding him. The Apostles and disciples, with the Holy Virgin at their head, are kneeling in a circle, and follow him with their eyes who is withdrawing his sensible presence from them. Two angels standing near them announce to them his return at the end of the ages.

Pentecost. "I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons shall prophecy." "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues."³

¹ Refurexi (*exsurrexi*) et adhuc tecum sum.—*Ps.* cxxxviii, 18.

Jhesum queritis Nazzarenum *crucifixum*; surrexit, non est hic.—*S. Mark*, xvi, 6.

² Ascendit super celos [*cherubim*] . . . et volavit super pennas ventorum.—*Ps.* xvii, 11.

Deus Jhus postquam locutus est *eis*, assumptus est in celum.—*S. Mark*, xvi, 19.

³ Effundam Spiritum meum super omnem^o carnem, et prophetabunt filii vestri.—*Joel*, ii, 28.

Repleti sunt omnes Spiritu sancto et ceperunt loqui variis linguis.—*Act. Apost.*, ii, 4.

The upper part of the supper-room is open, like a church-tribune. The Apostles and disciples, with their heads illuminated with the divine fire, surround the Holy Virgin. Before the closed door, five personages, whose head-dresses mark them to be of foreign nations, are listening, and testify their astonishment at understanding one same word in different languages.

The Coronation of the Virgin. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated . . . and all the house was full of His majesty." "Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He hath dwelt with them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God."¹

This picture seems to us to represent the communion of saints. The luminous centre whence the rays issue which light up the faces of all the saints, is the symbol of Jesus Christ uniting all the faithful by the power of the Sacraments and by the outpouring of charity. Our Lord was not satisfied with sending us the Holy Ghost; He crowned His work by making His mother and ours, Queen of Heaven, of grace and mercy. In her, also, is truly the Tabernacle where God communicates with men, since in Mary He has united together all His treasures, in order to distribute them to us through her.

A proof that Beato Angelico has wished to represent the Communion of Saints by the Coronation of the Virgin, is, that he has given no individuality to

¹ Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum. Et plena domus maiestate ejus.—*Isaias*, vi, 1, 3. (Inexact.)

Ecce tabernaculum Dei cum hominibus et habitavit cum eis, et ipsi populus ejus erunt et ipse Deus cum eis erit eorum Deus.—*Apoc.*, xxi, 3.

any of the personages assisting at her triumph. He has made them only representatives of those who form the Church in heaven and on earth. Some have the aureola, others have none, and many are accompanied by angel-guardians, who look upon them with solicitude and affection. The hierarchy of the Church is indicated by a pope and a bishop with the tiara and mitre, without the aureola. Beside them, are religious of various orders, and below them the laity of both sexes and of different professions. All those kneeling on the ground cannot as yet contemplate the glory of Jesus and Mary, but await that happiness in the joy of hope.

We do not pretend to explain each of the fifty-eight ravishing figures of this picture. It would require the painter himself to reveal to us the beauty of his thoughts. What is the meaning of the young girl and knight crowned with flowers; the king holding a rose, and the angel who seems to wish to open a little precious vase for him? The two musicians playing on their instruments, do they not represent Christian art in its sweetest and most spiritual expression? Beato Angelico might then have been placed near them with his brush. He must have been in communion with the saints, when he made this picture so pure and perfect. Our Lord and the Holy Virgin are admirable: they are clothed in garments of the same colour, as their souls were clothed with the same flesh. The effect of this composition is truly heavenly.

The pictures of the Life of our Lord present great differences in merit and execution. Heavy and badly-drawn figures contrast sometimes with others of ex-

traordinary exactness in movement and elegance of drapery. Sometimes, also, the work is hard and unfinished, whilst it is almost always remarkable for freedom and finish. Must this difference be explained by the inequalities of genius and the negligences of improvisation? If we must believe Vasari, our painter never reconsidered his first thought. We do not think so. Genius certainly does not always maintain itself at the same elevation, and the humility of Beato Angelico might make him renounce perfections which would have merited for him more glory before men. But the painter, like the orator, when less inspired, does not change his style; and we do not find Beato Angelico's style in the defects we have pointed out. We will explain them then by the joint-labour of his brother Fra Benedetto. The latter cultivated painting: Vasari tells us that he was very well practised in it, and that he assisted his brother in his works. We have studied the large miniatures in the choir-books of the convent of San Marco, and that study has enabled us to distinguish the hand of the two brothers sometimes in the same picture.¹

We shall, therefore, distinguish the works of Fra Benedetto from Beato Angelico's, not by the greater or less quantity of gold they have put into their pictures, as Chevalier Rossini proposes,² but by the character of the drawing and the processes of execution. Fra Benedetto's personages are generally dumpy and ill-set; their heads are too broad, and the

¹ Ben è vero che a far questi fu aiutato da un suo maggior fratello che era similmente miniatore ed assai esercitato nella pittura.

² *Storia della Pittura Italiana*, vol. ii, ch. xvii, p. 257.

extremities badly joined: the feet especially are often disagreeable. His figures are sketched with a heavy brown touch, whilst those of Beato Angelico are prepared with very great lightness, and the touch, hardly perceived, is of a brilliant red. The two brothers worked without rivalry and with the same inspiration; but Beato Angelico had a happier and better cultivated talent for rendering his own.



CHAPTER VII.

THE LAW OF LOVE.—THE LAST JUDGMENT.



THE Life of our Lord is clothed by two compositions, the summary and conclusion of it. They represent the *Law of Love* which the Gospel has given to the world, and the Last Judgment, which is the sanction of it.

Doubtless, it was difficult to express within a narrow compass the fundamental truths of religion: the unity of the two Testaments, the fulfilment of the prophecies, the revealed and accomplished mysteries, the establishment of the Church, the dogmas of the faith, the reign of charity, the hopes of a perfect happiness and the means of arriving at it. See how Beato Angelico has overcome the difficulty.

In the middle of the picture, on a ground covered with verdure and flowers, is raised the triumphant

Cross. It is the Tree of Life planted in the midst of the new earthly paradise. It has produced the divine Fruit which has saved us ; its shadow can alone protect us, and its sap render us fertile. A cross-bearing standard waves there ; it is the sign to point out the way and animate us to the combat. Around the staff is rolled a banderol, on which the twelve articles of the Creed are indicated : DEUS PATER. JHS. XPS. NATIVITAS. PASSIO. RESUREXIO. ASCENSIO. ADVENTUS IN MUNDO. SPIRITUS SANCTUS. ECCLESIA CUM SCIS. VENIA CRIMINUM. SUSCITATIO HOMINUM. VITA ETERNA.

On both sides, the personages of the Old and New Testament repeat the Creed with sublime accord. The Prophets and Apostles present their banderols, whereon corresponding texts are read. They have all had the same God, the same faith, the same Redeemer ; and what the Prophets hailed in the rising glimmer of dawn, the Apostles have contemplated in the broad light of day.

Jeremias has said : These shall call me Father, and shall not cease to walk after Me.—*S. Peter* replies : I believe in God, the Father Almighty.

David. The Lord hath said unto Me : Thou art My Son.—*S. John*. And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord.

Isaias. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son.—*S. James (son of Zebedee)*. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.

Zacharias. All shall look upon Me, because they have crucified Me.—*S. Andrew*. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.

Osee. O death, I will be thy death ; O hell, I will

be thy bite.—*S. Philip.* He descended into hell.—*S. Thomas.* The third day, He rose again from the dead.

Amos. He hath built His ascension in heaven.—*S. Bartholomew.* He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father Almighty.

Malachias. And I will come to you in judgment, and will be a speedy witness.—*S. Matthew.* From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

Joel. I will pour out My spirit on all the land.—*S. James (son of Alphaeus).* I believe in the Holy Ghost.

Solomon the King. She will communicate to me of her good things.—*S. Simon.* The holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints.

Micheas. The Lord will put away our iniquities.—*S. Jude.* The remission of sins.

Daniel. I will bring you forth from your sepulchres, O my people.—*Ezekiel.* Some shall awake unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach.—*S. Matthias.* The resurrection of the body, life everlasting.¹

¹ Tradition attributes to each of the Apostles one article of the Creed, which they may have repeated by inspiration before they separated to evangelize the world. But the assignation of the articles to each Apostle is not uniform: there are even two modes of dividing the Creed into twelve articles, according as we disjoin or unite the descent into hell and the resurrection of our Lord, or the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. It is to be remarked that our painter has followed both these methods. The Apostles' Creed proffers the division adopted by S. Thomas Aquinas, and the Symbol of the Prophets that of Durandus. (*See Bibliothèque Dominicaine, la Foi, les Œuvres et la Priere, d'après S. Thomas d'Aquin, p. 46; and the Rationale of Durandus, lib. iv. § 25.*)

We have given the names of the Apostles according to S. Thomas: the following are the texts of the Prophets' Symbol:—

1. Patrem vocabis me, et post me ingredi non cessabis.—*Jeremias, iii, 19.*
2. Dominus dixit ad me: Filius meus es tu.—*DAVID. Ps., ii, 7.*
3. Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium.—*Isaias, vii, 14.*

The foot of the Cross is formed of a candlestick with seven branches, representing the seven Sacraments. The Blood of Jesus Christ is the oil which feeds the light of grace in the Church. Banderols passed in the branches of the candlestick point out the Sacraments in the following order, and the texts of the Old and New Testament which refer to them.

Baptism. "All in Moses were baptized, in the cloud and in the sea." "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them."

Confirmation. "Seek the Lord, and be strengthened." "And thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren."

Orders. "The priests stood in their order." "Thou art a priest according to the order of Melchisedech."

Eucharist. "Melchisedech brought forth bread and wine." "This is My body: do this for a commemoration of Me."

Penance. "If a soul hath sinned, let it do penance for its sin." "Except you do penance, you shall all perish."

Marriage. "What God hath joined, let no man put asunder." "This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church."

4. Aspicient omnes ad me quoniam confixerunt.—*Zacharias*, xii, 10.

5. O mors, ero mors tua; ero morsus tuus, O inferne!—*Oseas*, xiii, 14.

6. Qui edificat in cœlo ascensionem suam.—*Amos*, ix, 6.

7. Et accedam ad vos in iudicio et ero testis velox.—*SOPHON.* *Malach.*, iii, 5.

8. Effundam de spiritu meo super omnem terram.—*Joel*, ii, 28.

9. Comunicabit mecum de bonis.—*SOLOMON REX.* *Sapient.* viii, 9.

10. Deponet Dominus omnes iniquitates nostras.—*MALACH.* *Micheas*, vii, 19.

11. Educam vos de sepulchris vestris populus meus.—*DANIEL.* *Ezechiel*, xxxvii, 12.

12. Evigilabunt (omnes) alii ad vitam eternam et alii in opprobrium.—*EZECHIEL.* *Daniel*, xii, 2.

The painter is often mistaken in pointing out his texts: no doubt he wrote them from memory.

Extreme Unction. "He shall make up ointments of health." "Is any one sick among you. Let him bring in the priests, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and if he be in sin, it shall be forgiven him."¹

On the right of the Cross, a nimbed female figure personifies the Law of Love. She does not hold a sword and a closed book, like Solomon, who represents the Old Law in the vision of Ezechiel. Her book is open, because the truth is now without figure and shadow. Her only arms is a shield inscribed with these words, *LEX AMORIS* (the Law of Love). Therein is the whole Gospel, the new commandment our Lord has come to teach by His life and words, To love God and men, as God Himself has loved us: this law

¹ These are the texts of the picture:—

BAPTISMUS. Omnes in Moyse baptizati (estis) *sunt* in nube et in mari.—

S. PAUL. *1 Cor.*, x, 2.

Ite, docete omnes gentes baptizantes eos.—*S. Matt.*, xxviii, 19.

CONFIRMATIO. Quærite Dominum, et confirmamini.—*Ps.*, civ, 4.

Tu aliquando conversus confirma fratres tuos.—*S. Luke*, xxii, 32.

ORDO. Sacerdotes steterunt in ordine suo.—*2 Paralip.*, xxx, 16.

Tu es sacerdos secundum ordinem Melchisedec.—*Ps.*, cix; *Heb.*, v, 6.

EUCARISTIA. Melchisedec proferens panem et vinum.—*Genesis*, xiv, 18.

Hoc est enim corpus meum. Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.—

S. Luke, xxii, 19.

PENITENTIA. Si peccaverit anima, agat pœnitentiam pro peccato suo.—*Levit.*, v.

Nisi pœnitentiam (egerris) *habueritis*, omnes simul (*similiter*) peribitis.—

S. Luke, xiii, 3.

MATRIMONIUM. Quod Deus ergo conjunxit, homo non separet.—*S. Mark*,

x, 9.

Sacramentum hoc magnum est, ego autem dico in XPo et in Ecclesia.—S. PAUL.

Eph., v, 32.

EXTREMA UNCTIO. Unctiones conficiet sanitatis.—*Ecclus.*, xxxviii, 7.

Infirmatur quis in vobis? Inducat presbyteros (*Ecclesiæ*), et orent super eum, ungentes eum oleo (*in nomine Domini*), et oratio fidei salvabit infirmum, et *alleviabit eum Dominus*, et si in peccato sit, remittetur ei.—*S. James*, v, 14.

includes all others; and the Church is established to realize and spread it. The Church is the law of the living and eternal love. The spouse of Christ is artless and weak like this young female holding the book and shield; she has no other attire but her poverty, no other sword but her doctrine, no other power but her law of love, *lex amoris*. She makes the martyrs triumph, protects the feeble and lays the mighty at their feet: she establishes the family and society. Love one another, and all human laws will become useless; the sword of justice will no longer find the guilty, and peace will reign throughout all the earth.

The law of love which Christ has come to give the world, is also the new law of art. S. Jerome, commenting on the verse of S. Matthew, "the things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart," says, "the principle of the soul is not, as Plato says, in the brain, but, according to Christ, in the heart."¹ This, it seems to us, is an admirable distinction between Pagan and Christian art. Art is a language, of which the mouth is the most sublime organ. Antiquity places the principle of art in the intellect; Christianity, in the will: our Lord has re-established the soul in its true centre. Memory and intellect are the means and ministers of the will. The will is free and supreme, and our heart is its throne and empire; it may uphold it against God Himself, and it is to subdue this one thing, which may truly be ours to do, that the Word

¹ Quæ autem procedunt de ore, de corde exeunt.—*S. Matt.*, xv, 18.

Principale igitur animæ non, secundum Platonem, in cerebro est, sed juxta Christum in corde. (*Catena aurea.*)

has wrought all the marvels of creation and redemption. He has taken a heart in order to captivate ours; by our heart only can we honour God and please Him.

Greece made Minerva issue from the brain of Jupiter; the Church has drawn Christian poetry from the Heart of Jesus Christ. Pagan Art has never loved its gods; it has expressed the beauties of nature, the intoxication of the senses, or the terrors of man. Personal interest has been its sole aim; the palms of Olympus or the bounties of the Emperors: whilst the life of Christian art is, to love and make Him loved who is the first cause and the end of it. There its mission lies, like that of the Apostle and martyrs, and outside this law of love it sees only falsehood and vanity.

This law of love, so beautiful and sweet, but so disarmed and forgotten, must have a sanction. The work of our Lord has not ended on earth: all He has said and done, is, so to speak, only the preparation for the solemn act which will terminate the ages, and open to us the boundless scenes of eternity: Christ will come in all His majesty, to judge the living and the dead.

The last day of the human race is the vastest and most sublime subject art can represent. The Christian religion alone was able to give its match. Heathen antiquity had imagined in the shadows of death a mysterious place, whither each soul went to receive its sentence separately; but painters and sculptors employed themselves little in expressing the joys of the Elysian fields and the torments of the infernal regions recounted by the poets. The theology of the East offered beyond the present, only successive changes of the metempsychosis, which granted delays to crime, and

allowed it to brave divine justice indefinitely. All in its doctrines was indecisive, obscure and individual. The Gospel-light alone has made to shine on the confines of time and on the threshold of an immutable eternity, that last scene, in which heaven, earth and hell, all ages, peoples and conditions will be called together : that decisive moment when the Saviour will come and demand of each an account of his life, when all actions will be judged, truth made plain, history explained and Providence glorified ; that desirable moment, when those who have thirsted after justice shall be fully satisfied.

This sublime subject was the great poem of the mediæval artists. Sculptors placed it at the doors of cathedrals, as at the entrance of heaven. In this prophetic vision of the Last Judgment, Christ is seated on his throne surrounded by angels and saints, and near him is the Cross, as the text of the law. The Virgin without spot bends towards her Son, to serve as advocate for us. S. John the Evangelist or S. John Baptist intercedes in the name of love and penitence. Angels sound the trumpet, and the dead raise up their tombstones : the blessed are led into Abraham's bosom, whilst the reprobate are cast down into the yawning jaws of hell. On the lower courses, the vices and virtues are represented, which, higher up, receive their chastisements or rewards. Such is the theme which sculptors in the middle ages have rendered with incredible variety.

Representations of this kind offered their indelible instruction in the public squares ; and there all found fears or hopes. If tyranny did not cease its violence,

fervitude at least was consoled, when it perceived, beyond the pangs of life, the glory of virtue and the delights of eternity.

The great school of Giotto was worthy to paint so vast a subject, which the genius of Dante had explained to it. Orcagna especially gave it an admirable manner, in the church of Santa Maria Novella, and under the galleries of the *Campo Santo*. But Beato Angelico, in the representation of the Last Judgment, has surpassed all who have preceded and followed him, by comprehension of the subject, beauty of composition and grandeur of character.

The oldest Last Judgment by Beato Angelico is the one closing the Life of our Lord. It is inferior to the others, but still presents beauties of the first order. This composition, double the size of the other pictures, is framed, like them, with texts of Holy Scripture. "Let the nations come up into the valley of Josaphat; for there will I sit to judge all nations." "He shall sit upon the seat of His majesty, and judge the good and the bad." "Come ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you." "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."¹

Christ is sitting in the midst of a circular glory; and near him, the Blessed Virgin, S. John Baptist, the Apostles, and the founders of Orders are ranged on the clouds of heaven. In the lower part, the resur-

¹ Ascendant gentes in vallem Josaphat; quia ibi sedebo, ut judicem omnes gentes.—*Joel*, iii, 12.

Sedebit super sedem majestatis sue (et judicabit bonos et malos).—*S. Matt.*, xxv., 31.

Venite, benedicti Patris mei; possidete paratum vobis regnum.—*S. Matt.*, xxv, 34.

(*Disced*) ite à me, maledicti, in ignem eternum.—*S. Matt.*, xxv, 41.

rection of the dead is shown in two personages issuing from their tomb, whose expression and gestures make known their different lots. On the right, on a flowery turf, the blessed of every state contemplate the heaven awaiting them, and receive the fraternal kiss of their guardian-angels; whilst on the left, the reprobate are dragged pell-mell by devils into hell.

The upper part of this composition is admirable. Christ is calm and terrible: his uplifted right hand is full of power. His half-opened garment lets the wound of his side be seen. The adjustment of his mantle has a fulness and nobleness which recalls the finest Greek types. The two groups of saints composing his tribunal may be compared with those seen in the Dispute of the Holy Sacrament. If Raphael has a purer design, a more learned pencil and more varied lines, Beato Angelico has graver attitudes, more truthful expressions and a more religious character; and in relative talent, it must astonish us that there was the interval of nearly a century between the two painters. The elect still on the earth breathe peace, the certainty of happiness, and all that sense of love and adoration which Beato Angelico knew so well how to give. The reprobate are painted with extraordinary force and freedom of pencil. They present foreshortenings and movements, which remind us of the hell and thunder-stricken of Luca Signorelli in the frescoes of the cathedral at Orvieto. The two sides of this composition are united together by a remarkable group: an angel who is separating the good from the bad, drags along one damned, whose gesture and figure express all the anguish of despair.

The other Last Judgment, which the Academy of Fine Arts at Florence possesses, is grander and more complete. It was executed for the church of the Camaldolese, and served to ornament the seat of the celebrant at high mass.¹ We may perhaps be allowed to borrow the beautiful description of it given by Comte de Montalembert, who is so capable of appreciating and praising the merit of Beato Angelico.

“Imagine a board of some feet square. In the middle of the upper part, our Lord is seated in his glory. His arms are stretched out; his right hand, imprinted with the radiant wound of the crucifixion, is open on the side of the elect, whom he seems inviting to enter into his kingdom: his left hand is equally extended on the side of the damned, but it is closed, and they can only see the back of it. This gesture alone says everything; it has a sublime simplicity. Our Lord is in the midst of a cloud of seraphim, disposed in the form of an almond (a form consecrated to the Trinity, of which that fruit is the symbol): these seraphim are red, to express the ardour of the love consuming them. Around them, is ranged, in concentric ellipses, the whole heavenly hierarchy in adoration, each order with its symbol, the Archangels with the *pallium*, the Powers with helmets and lances, &c.: each little figure is a charming miniature in

¹ Fece . . . nella chiesa de' monachi degli Angeli un Paradiso ed un Inferno di figure piccole, nel quale con bella osservanza fece i beati bellissimi e pieni di giubbilo e di celeste letizia, ed i dannati apparecchiati alle pene dell' inferno in varie guise mestissimi, e portanti nel volto impresso il peccato e demerito loro. I beati si veggiono entrare celestemente ballando per la porta del paradiso, ed i dannati dai demoni all' inferno nell' eterne pene strascinati. Questa opera è in detta chiesa andando verso l'altar maggiore a man ritta, dove sta il sacerdote, quando si cantano le messe, a sedere.

itself. At the feet of Christ, an angel raises a triumphant Cross, and two others are still sounding long trumpets, which have wakened the human race. On his right, Mary, clothed with a long white robe studded with stars and lined with green (the emblematic colour of hope), with her hands timidly crossed on her breast, raises towards her Son a tender look of love and prayer for poor mortals. On his left, S. John Baptist presents the symbolical lamb to the Supreme Judge, as if to appease him. Behind the Queen of Angels, are the greatest of the saints: Joseph, at the side of Mary, and as if protected by her; Peter, with the gold key of paradise and the silver key of purgatory; Paul, with his sword; Moses; David, with his harp; Francis of Assisi, with his bright stigmas; Stephen, his figure all impressed with the joy of martyrdom; and many others. Light white clouds enshroud their feet; and long rays of fire glitter on every side around them, for they are already in the bosom of celestial glory. Nothing can equal the expression of all the heads, that ineffable mingling of calm and serene beatitude and of holy reverence, with which the burst of divine justice strikes them. The most exacting imagination remains satisfied and even surpassed; it seems, as Vasari himself writes, that the souls of the blessed cannot be otherwise in heaven. The lower part of the picture perfectly corresponds with the upper half: the centre is occupied with a long avenue of open and empty graves, and the perspective of them is terminated with the great tomb of Christ, which alone is close, *because it has nothing to give up*. The judgment is being pronounced; and every one

knows his lot. On the left, the damned of every class, amongst whom our Beato (although born in an age of fanaticism and oppression) has not feared to place kings, cardinals and a great many monks, are dragged by a throng of devils towards hell at the extremity of the picture, where the seven capital sins are seen punished in seven different circles; and at the bottom, the great Lucifer of Dante, devouring a sinner in each of his three chaps. On the right, are the elect; and here may be seen to what degree Christian genius gets the better of difficulties, and how an inconceivable variety may be reconciled with the most complete unity: all have the head raised towards heaven, and look on their Saviour, whilst thanking and adoring him, and not one is like his neighbour. In the first rank, is a pope, whose calm and lofty countenance seems to express especially the joy of repose after his hard labours; behind him, an emperor, type of Christian chivalry; then a king, and beside the king a poor pilgrim, who has journeyed even to heaven; a young princess all radiant with purity and faith; very many religious, bishops, laymen and monks of ravishing beauty, but in whom it is well seen that the physical beauty is only the outward beaming of moral beauty. But see the guardian-angels who go seeking the elect, over whom they have watched during the time of trial. Each angel is kneeling at the side of his elect, impresses a fraternal kiss upon his lips, and then conducts him to heaven across a flower-enamelled meadow, where angels and saved men dance together, *Cantantes chorosque ducentes in occursum regis*. Both are crowned

with white and red roses; and in the single expression of their hands holding each other, there is a treasure of poetry. The round being finished, two and two they wing away towards the heavenly Jerusalem. Its glittering walls are seen in the distance; the half-opened portal allows a torrent of golden rays to escape, in the midst of which two of the blessed are being lost, it may be an angel and an elect, or two souls who have loved each other and been saved together.

“ ‘ Suo alle poste rivolando uguali.—*Purg.*, c. viii.

“ Add to this sketch the prestige of a fresh and pure colouring, a correct design without anatomical exaggeration, draperies of perfect grace, and expressions of countenance truly divine, and we shall have a feeble idea of this *Last Judgment*. When we have seen and understood it, we remain quite cold before that of Michael Angelo.”¹

¹ *Du Vandalisme et du Catholicisme dans l'Art*, p. 99.

[“ It is about seven palms long, and its summit is in the form of three arches, the central one being largest, and the two side ones smaller. The Final Judgment occupies the central one; in that on the right, he painted Paradise; and in that on the left, Hell. The figures are of the dimensions of those which he painted on the gradini of his pictures.” . . . “ But more charming than even this, are the kisses and embracings which the Elect interchange with the Angels who protected and guided them on the path of peril. Kneeling, they clasp each other in heavenly affection. The idea of the painter, probably, was to exhibit the angels, venerating in these bodies, humanity glorified. The greetings between the angels and the elect terminated, we see them linking hands and gracefully dancing on a sweet meadow, enamelled with most beautiful flowers. Their garments glisten with innumerable little golden stars; the head of each is wreathed with a garland of white and red roses, whilst a brilliant little flame burns on the forehead of each angel. Then light, airy, graceful, and even during the dance absorbed in ecstatic contemplation, carolling and singing they advance towards the celestial Jerusalem; and the nearer they approach to it, the more ethereal and luminous do their bodies become; till at last, arrived at the gates of the holy city, they appear to be trans-

After this fine description, it remains for us only to present some observations on the execution of the picture. The upper part is admirable for light, colouring and purity. The lower part is far from offering the same qualities. The composition of it is fine, and the groups well disposed; but the figures are short and ill-designed.¹ How explain this contrast? We do not hesitate to perceive in this picture the joint workmanship of the two brothers, Beato Angelico and Fra Benedetto. The attentive study of the painting will justify, we hope, what we have said of the style and execution of the two artists. There was a great inequality between their talents; but Beato Angelico was too modest to retouch his brother's paintings and harmonize them with his own. He has begun the painting, and Fra Benedetto finished it, by copying doubtless the lower part of some other Last Judgment, of which this one appears to be a repetition.²

This Last Judgment is the one which forms part of the gallery of Cardinal Fesch.³ A great number

muted into most subtle and resplendent spirits; and then, two by two, holding each other's hand, they are introduced into eternal beatitude. Where did the painter find this sweet conception? How was he able to develop such varied beauties? We confess our inability to give or imagine a reply."—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, pp. 235, 238. TRANSLATOR'S note.]

¹ P. Marchese has remarked this difference. "E questa parte del dipinto, se nella composizione non è del tutto infelice, cede di gran lunga al rimanente, così nel disegno come nella esecuzione" (p. 281).

² On the gold of the framing these words, traced with a point, are read beneath the hell, "*In inferno nulla est redemptio.*"

³ I have not been able to study this picture at leisure. Cardinal Fesch died in 1839, just when I was to have had the honour of being presented to him, and I only ran over his gallery on the day of his interment. I have been assured that this Last Judgment is now in England, in the gallery of Lord Ward.

of artists look on it as the masterpiece of Beato Angelico. The composition is the same as the one of which Count de Montalembert has given a description, that cannot be repeated. All its superiority lies in the execution, in the purity of drawing, sweetness of pencil and elegance of the figures. We have been able to compare together some outline drawings of the angels flying towards heaven with the elect, with the celebrated female dancers found at Pompeii and preserved in the Bourbon Museum at Naples.¹ These pictures, executed on a black ground, are perhaps the most perfect relics of ancient painting we possess. They have many points of resemblance with the work of Beato Angelico; in the matter of art, there is the same talent, the same grace, the same lightness, but employed with a different inspiration and with quite a different aim. The half-clothed females in transparent draperies disturb the senses, by their wanton postures and voluptuous forms. The artist has placed them on a black ground, like evil desires in the shades of our heart, and has decorated the walls of a banquet-hall with them, in order to arouse thoughts of debauchery amidst the pleasures of the table. Our painter, on the contrary, has consecrated the delicacy of his pencil to represent the joys of ecstasy and the triumph of virtue: in the full light of truth, he has painted heavenly dances, which inspire peace and hope. The chaste figures flying away two and two attract and purify our soul, by detaching it from the seduction of the senses. God has created

¹ See *Antiquités d'Herculanum*, par David, graveur, 1 vol., p. 64 et seq.

artists as the angels ; according as they are faithful or unfaithful to Him, they remove us from, or bring us nearer, the Creator.

Another masterpiece of Beato Angelico is the small Last Judgment in the Corfini Gallery, at Rome.¹ None of his pieces have been painted with greater care and love. The composition is not so extensive as the others : it seems to have been executed for a religious order. Christ is seated in his glory : with one hand he curses the damned ; and in the other he holds an open book, wherein are the symbolical Alpha and Omega. In front of him, on his right, is S. Peter with the keys ; on the left, S. Paul with the sword upon his knees. They hold open books, and might be hearing the fulfilment of the text more unchangeable than earth and heaven. Behind these two great saints of the Church, are two Apostles ; a pope (S. Gregory ?) ; a bishop (S. Augustin ?) ; a deacon (S. Lawrence ?) ; and the founders of orders, S. Benedict, S. Dominic and S. Francis of Assisi. In the upper part and as the back-ground, is a multitude of angels variously disposed and of charming expression. At the bottom of the tribunal, and in the azure sky, an angel with golden wings raises the Cross which judges the world ; on his right, an angel makes the trumpet of the resurrection heard ; whilst on his left, another angel shows, with one hand, the crown of recompense, and with the other, the rod of chastisement.

¹ This picture and two others which accompany it and represent the Pentecost and the Ascension, came out of a church in the environs of Florence, of which the Corfini family had the patronage. The figure of Christ in the *Ascension* is very beautiful ; the picture of the *Pentecost* has been unfortunately retouched.

In the lower part, a line of empty tombs divides the blest from the reprobate, represented on both sides by religious of various orders. Again the angels come to embrace, with overflowing joy, those who were entrusted to them on earth. This idea was like a devotion in Beato Angelico; but it must be remarked that he never represents angels embracing females, fearing, no doubt, to arouse some profane thoughts by that heavenly kiss.

Hell is expressed with an extraordinary energy and vivacity of pencil. This picture, destined for the instruction of a cloister, reminds us that Beato Angelico belonged to the part of the reform of which the great S. Catherine of Sienna had been the Apostle. The vices of religious are particularly attacked in it. The hideous embraces of devils contrast with those of the angels. One devil drags to himself a monk, whose purse, hung at his neck, points out his crime; another lifts from the head of a Franciscan the cardinal's hat, the dream of his ambition and the cause of his perdition. All these figures express remorse and despair. In the midst of the damned, a terrified nun raises her veil with a dramatic gesture, which proves how greatly our painter possessed all the resources of his art. This picture, which has the dimensions of a miniature, has all the grandeur and style of a monumental painting.

A fifth Last Judgment attributed to Beato Angelico is in the Museum at Berlin. M. H. Fortoul has eulogized it in his work on Germany.¹ Yet this is only a repetition, or perhaps a copy, of the picture

¹ *L'Art en Allemagne*, vol. ii, p. 248.

at Florence, and an awkward restoration has a great deal lessened its value. In the gallery of the Uffizi, is also preserved the original design of another Last Judgment, but we are not acquainted with the picture.

Thus our painter has, many times, and always admirably, represented this grand subject, which, in our days, we dare no longer undertake. We seem to have lost the comprehension of it, since the gigantic talent of Michael Angelo has profaned it in the Sistine chapel, to the pitch of scandalizing Aretino himself.¹ Painters have seen in it nothing more than an occasion of showing their talent by picturesque positions and fine laying-

¹ Cæsar Cantu, in his *Histoire Universelle*, vol. xiv, p. 255, gives this letter of Aretino, dated Venice:—"November, 1565. Is it possible," says he, "that the great Michael Angelo has wished to show as much religious impiety as artistic perfection? Is it possible that you, so superior to men that you disdain their society,—you have done this in the greatest temple of God, over the first altar of Jesus, in the most renowned chapel of the world, in a place where the great cardinals of the Church, where venerable priests and the Vicar of Christ confess, contemplate and adore His body, blood and flesh? Your work would have been better suited for a saloon of voluptuous baths than for so august an assembly. But our souls have more need of devotion than of vigour of design. May God then inspire the sanctity of S. Paul, as He inspired the blessedness of Gregory, who preferred to strip Rome of the superb ancient statues rather than, on account of the perfection, to deprive the humble images of the saints of the reverence of their faithful."

Salvator Rosa, in his Satyres, also reproaches Michael Angelo for the nudities of the Sistine chapel, which to him looks like a stove:—

"Dovei pur distinguere e pensare
Che dipingevi in chiesà: in quanto a me
Sembra una stufa questo vostro altare . . .

Dunque là dove al ciel porgendo offerte
Il sovrano pastore i voti scioglie,
S'hanno a veder le oscenità scoperte?"

out of scene. Therein is not the true aim of art. The love of glory is an egotistical feeling, which leads genius astray as it disturbs society. The love of God can alone realize the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, and preserve them in an admirable unity.



CHAPTER VIII.

PICTURES BY BEATO ANGELICO IN THE MUSEUMS AND CHURCHES OF FLORENCE.



HE painter of Fiesole has enriched particular churches, convents and chapels of Florence with his pictures. These masterpieces were made to be placed near the tabernacle, amidst the incense and lights, in order to stir up the piety of the faithful.

Revolutions have torn them from their sanctuaries, to expose them in museums, where they contrast with all around them. Those Virgins, those Christs, those angels so beautiful and pure, are now found mixed with ordinary portraits and the profane nudities of the Renaissance: they are the sacred vessels of the temple in the midst of Belthasar's feast. Museums offer to the mind an idea of pillage and a proof of decay. Art is become enslaved and mercenary, when it no longer

works for public monuments. It went and offered its works to the caprices of princes; and then palaces were filled with pictures inspired by interest and vanity, but have afterwards received better guests. They have collected religious paintings made for other places and other times. Museums are medleys like the world; each one can there choose friends after his heart. Let us go there and seek Beato Angelico; and if we sometimes find him in bad company, the presence of vice will make his virtue shine more bright.

The gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts at Florence is the richest in Beato Angelico's pictures. Besides those we have spoken of, it possesses other masterpieces, which we are about to examine.

Without contradiction, the most remarkable is the Descent from the Cross, in the room of the great pictures, No. 14. Vasari informs us that it was in the church of Santa Trinita. "In Santa Trinita," he says, "a picture in the sacristy, representing a Descent from the Cross, is executed with so much care, that it may be reckoned amongst the best works he ever did."¹ This picture is nearly one metre and seventy centimetres in height, and eighty centimetres in width: the upper part is divided into three ogives corresponding with the three principal groups. The summit of Calvary has been abandoned to the faithful disciples; the Cross is placed in the centre of the composition, two ladders are applied to it, the disciples respectfully take down the body of our Lord laid in the sleep of death, and S. John is going to receive it tenderly into

¹ "In S. Trinità una tavola della sagrestia dove è un deposito di croce, nel quale mise tanta diligenza, che si può fra migliori cose che mai facesse annoverare."

his arms. This group is admirable for lines and expressions. The Christ is a very remarkable design: his fair body bears the marks of the scourging; his head is of a divine purity; on his cruciform aureola are read the words, "CORONA GLORIE," the crown of glory; for He had need to suffer thus, to enter into glory. On the right of the Saviour, is the group of holy women bringing the linen for the burial; S. Mary Magdalen is still kissing his feet; and the Holy Virgin contemplates him in the trance of grief. The pious hand of the artist has written on her aureola the praise he was daily reciting in her office: "O Virgin Mary, there is none like unto thee," "VIRGO MARIA N. E. T. SIMILIS." The other females surrounding her are admirable for their attitude and expression. On the opposite side, the disciples contemplate the scene, and discourse on the Passion; the one nearest the Cross shows with one hand the crown of thorns, and with the other the three nails. It is impossible to render compassion and gratitude in a more striking manner. In the foreground of the picture, between this group and the central one, a young man on his knees prays to the Saviour, and, striking his breast, adores him. The painter has lent him all his own feelings. On the frame beneath the Christ, is read, "I am counted among them that go down to the pit;" beneath the holy women, "They shall mourn Him as an only son, for He was innocent;" beneath the disciples, "Behold how the Just One dies, and no one thinketh of it in his heart."¹

¹ Estimatus sum cum descendentibus in lacum.

Plangent eum *planctu* quasi *super* unigenitum, quia innocens.

Ecce quomodo moritur Justus, et nemo percipit corde.

Yet this scene of anguish has something of a heavenly peace. It is the Passion meditated with love in solitude, and the tears it causes to flow are sweeter than all the joys of earth. A divine light seems to illumine all the personages; and the painter has spread a beautiful carpet of flowers and verdure beneath their feet. The landscape is executed with incredible charms; it is as fine and lightsome as the most graceful perspectives of Flemish pictures. On one side, is seen the city of Jerusalem, and on the other, the mountains of Judea. Angels appear in the sky, to unite in the adoration of men. There is no picture which makes the soul of Beato Angelico better understood.¹ Here are the holy thoughts with which he inspired a young person, whose impressions the Count de Montalembert has greatly wished us to impart. She wrote: "Oh, what excess of love of God, of immense and burning contrition, must that dear Beato Angelico have had on the day he painted it! How he must have meditated and wept, that day, in the depth of his little cell, over the sufferings of our Divine Master! Every stroke of the pencil, every tint which came from it, seem to be so many acts of sorrow and love issuing from the bottom of his soul. What a moving sermon is the sight of such a picture! . . . O delicious masterpiece! Oh, what a happiness, what true grace, to be able to contemplate, in this marvellous representation of our Lord's Passion, the heart so ardent and contrite of the saint, which thus breathes the sentiments of

¹ There is a Descent from the Cross, by Starnina, which has some resemblance with Beato Angelico's. There are found in it, again, the disciple who carries the crown and nails, and the one who is kneeling in the foreground. But what inferiority! (See ROSINI, *Storia della Pittura*, t. xxxi.)

forrow and love inundating his soul, during his long hours passed in the calm of solitude and in the presence of God. Grant me, O Lord, some part in this exceeding contrition, that whilst contemplating these works, my heart may be so profoundly initiated, by this seraphic religious, into the way of Thy sorrows, that I may incessantly think of sharing in them, and urged by love, of entering into this road of the Cross, every time it pleaseth Thee to send me troubles. Perhaps I ought to limit my request to submission; but it is too little. Oh! yes, the force of love, that is what I fight for, that is what I entreat Thee to grant me, after having seen all the works of Thy painter. Others look at them simply as works of art. I myself have drawn from them—I feel it—unspeakable consolation and deep instruction.”¹ It is impossible to make a more splendid eulogy on this picture. Has ever work of art inspired such feelings?

This composition is framed with little pictures, as a diamond is surrounded with precious pearls. These pictures, twenty in number, are real masterpieces. We will particularly point out, on the left, S. Lawrence, of an admirably purity; S. Francis of Assisi; S. Michael, whose head is set off by his golden wings: on the right, S. Jerome, holding an iron discipline and a stone, with which he has made his breast bleed; S. Stephen, of charming youth; S. Dominic, with the capuce on his head; S. Peter Martyr; and S. Peter the Apostle, holding the keys and book. All these figures are admirable in execution and of great character. The upper part of the picture is crowned with three sub-

¹ *Du Vandalisme et du Catholicisme dans l'Art*, p. 97.

jects, not by our painter, but attributed to Lorenzo degl' Angeli, a Camaldolese monk. The subjects of them are, the Resurrection, the holy women at the sepulchre, and the *Noli me tangere*.¹

¹ [“The painting of the Deposition from the Cross is about seven palms high by eight wide; its upper part is pointed, or, to speak more intelligibly, is in the form of three triangles, which are divided from the principal painting by a gilded cornice. The points and cornice are beautifully chiselled and painted, the former being ornamented with many little histories, and the latter with some minute figures of Saints, somewhat larger in their dimensions, and certainly far more perfect than those which he executed in the Perugian painting. Contrary to his usual idea, he here represents Mount Calvary clothed with flowers and verdure, as though he meant to signify that the foot-prints and blood of the Redeemer caused the most beautiful vegetation to flourish on that accursed hill. That such was the painter's idea may be collected from the fact of the distant mountains in the back ground (the perspective of which is admirable,) being treeless and herbless, if we except here and there some isolated palm. On the opposite side is a good perspective of Jerusalem, designed and finished with incredible diligence. The figures are disposed in three groups; in the centre are two disciples, who, standing on the steps of the ladder that leans against the Cross, lower the Redeemer's body; at the ladder's foot two disciples support the sanctified remains, and the youngest of the two who betrays such wonderful emotion is the Evangelist John; a fifth, prostrate on the earth, adores the body, and raising his hand to his breast seems to say, ‘*I should have died this ignominious death!*’ The group on the left presents six figures, one of which holds the thorny crown in his right hand, and in his left the bloody nails wherewith the Redeemer's hands and feet were pierced; whilst he exhibits them to an old man who contemplates them in profound dolor. . . . Two of the disciples gaze intently on the dead body of Christ, and in their midst is one who, unable to restrain his tears, buries his face in his hands and sobs almost audibly. . . . The group on the right is composed of pious women. Whoever would find the tender and loving Magdalene let him seek her at the feet of Jesus. The Angelico represents her supporting them and imprinting her last kiss on them. Behind her is the Mother. Oh! what a woe-begone Mother! Grief and agony have so wrung her heart, that the eye knows not on which of the two objects it should rest—the lifeless body of the Lord, or on her, the most afflicted of women! Who can behold this work and not feel love and sorrow stirring in his heart? Two women hold the winding-sheet, and two others contemplate the poignant anguish of Mary; but the last figure at the side is the most beautiful of all; it is that of a woman whose whole person is robed in a violet mantle, which she gracefully gathers over her bosom, thus revealing only the exquisite beauty of her face. The figure of the Redeemer is perfection itself, and nothing can exceed the softness of the lines or

The Academy of Fine Arts possesses a picture which seems to be the continuation of this Descent from the Cross, and to have been executed at the same time. It is the Burial, found in the room of little paintings, and made for the confraternity of Santa Croce del Tempio.¹

This composition is full of touching melancholy. It is no longer the heavenly brightness which shone just now on the height of Calvary, but the sweet evening twilight when the day is only a recollection. The scene takes place near the walls of Jerusalem, in a lonely garden. All are paying their last homage to the Sacred Body of the Saviour. The instruments of his Passion, his crown, and the nails which less than his love fastened him to the Cross, are placed near him as the insignia of his royalty. Amongst the holy women and disciples, Beato Angelico has painted S. Dominic and Beata Villana, a tertiary, whose relics repose at Santa Maria Novella. In front of her we read these words: XPO IHV, LAMOR MIO CRUCIFISSO: Christ Jesus, my crucified love. It is the cry of all these personages, as well as of our painter.

In the same room, are also many pictures by Beato Angelico. No. 43, a picture in two parts: below, the Adoration of the Magi; above, a Pietà. The head of Christ is very beautiful. Unfortunately this painting is damaged. Nos. 51 and 54, fragments of the Legend

the delicate transparency of the mezzotints. The nude which exhibits the stripes of the scourge and the marks of the nails is most correct. The anatomy is well defined; nor is there a single trace of that harshness that offends us in the productions of the Giotto school.—MARCHESE, by *Meehan*, vol. i, p. 231. TRANSLATOR'S note.]

¹ Per la compagnia del Tempio di Firenze fece in una tavola un Cristo morto.

of S S. Cosmas and Damian. These two pictures are badly preserved and much inferior to those we shall find in the chapel of the Painters at the Nunciata. No. 39, a Madonna holding the Child Jesus. The style recalls the painting at Perugia and Cortona. The head of the Virgin is of great purity. This picture is surmounted with a representation of the Holy Trinity.

The exhibition-room of the Academy of Fine Arts offers us three other very remarkable Madonnas.

No. 13. The Blessed Virgin, clothed in a blue mantle, holds the Child Jesus on her knees; two angels in bright red robes are behind her throne; on the right, S. Peter Martyr, S. Cosmas and S. Damian; on the left, S. Francis, S. Antony and S. Augustin. The architectural background recalls the designs of Brunelleschi. This picture is remarkable for drawing and colouring. The gradino is not so well preserved: in the centre, a Pietà; on one side, S. Dominic, S. Bernardine and S. Peter the Apostle; and on the other, S. Peter Martyr, S. Mark and S. Augustin.

No. 16 is probably the altar-piece executed by Beato Angelico for the high altar of San Marco.¹ According to the testimony of Vasari, it was one of the most beautiful works of the artist, but its state of preservation now leaves much to be desired. The Holy Virgin is

¹ Ma particolarmente è bella a maraviglia la tavola dell' altar maggiore di quella chiesa, perchè oltre che la Madonna muove a divozione chi la guarda per la semplicità sua, e che i fanti che le sono intorno sono simili a lei, la predella nella quale sono storie del martirio di S. Cosimo e Damiano, e degli altri, è tanto ben fatta, che non è possibile immaginarsi di poter veder mai cosa fatta con più diligenza, nè le più delicate o meglio intese figurine di quelle.—This gradino is in the chapel of the Painters, in the cloister of the Nunciata.

seated upon a throne, surrounded with angels. On her right, are S. Dominic, S. Francis and S. Peter Martyr; and on her left, S. Lawrence, S. Paul and S. Mark. S. S. Cosmas and Damian, patrons of the Medici, are kneeling before her. All these personages are grouped with great skill: there is no longer the symmetry of the school of Giotto. The back-ground is decorated with architecture and garlands of flowers. A magnificent carpet is spread before the throne, whereon a Crucifixion is painted, which the priest saw from the altar.

No. 17. This picture is well preserved. The Madonna is upon her throne, and the Child Jesus holds an opened pomegranate, symbol of the charity which would lead him to Calvary. His mother contemplates him with a kind of fear. Around the throne are S. S. Cosmas and Damian, S. Peter Martyr, S. John the Evangelist, S. Francis and S. Lawrence. This picture is feebler in drawing than the preceding ones.

On entering the gallery of the Uffizi, at Florence, one of the first pictures we met with, on the left, is the magnificent altar-piece executed by Beato Angelico for the Guild of flax-workers,¹ about 1433. The Guilds of workmen played a great part in the history of the Italian Republics. At Florence, it was necessary to belong to them, in order to take part in the government; and on that condition only was Dante, in 1300, nominated prior of the city. We have not to examine what these Guilds did, in the middle ages, for liberty and for

¹ Vafari and Marchese both state that the painting was executed for the Guild of *Joiners*. TRANSLATOR'S note.

developing industry; we will only remark that they were intelligent and powerful protections to the arts. As their constitution was eminently religious, they raised monuments, chapels which the most skilful artists decorated; and a noble rivalry existed amongst them, and led them to make the greatest sacrifices. They carried on their work with perseverance, and paid with royal munificence. Taste for the Beautiful was thus developed in the multitude, and art remained religious and popular. The flax-workers desired to have a fine altar-piece with doors, for their place of assembling. They had asked a design from Lorenzo Ghiberti, which did not please them; so they applied to Beato Angelico, and our painter knew better than that celebrated artist how to satisfy their desire and devotion. The panel was prepared October 29th, 1432;¹ and, July 11th, 1433, the Guild settled the conditions following:—"They have agreed with Fra Guido, called Fra Giovanni, of the Order of S. Dominic, of Fiesole, to paint a tabernacle of our Lady, to be painted inside and outside, with colours, and diversified with gold and silver the best and finest to be found, with all his skill and industry: and for all and for his pains and labour, to have one hundred and ninety florins in gold, or what less he can in conscience, and with the figures in his drawing."²

¹ BALDINUCCI, *Notizie di professori del disegno*, decenn. 2, part i, § iv.

² Allogorono a frate Guido, vocato frate Giovanni dell' ordine di S. Domenico di Fiesole, a dipingere un tabernacolo di nostra Donna, nella detta arte, dipinto di dentro e fuori, con colori, oro e argento variato, de' migliori e più fini che si trovino, con ogni sua arte e industria, per tutto et per sua fatica e manifattura, per fiorini cento novanta d'oro, o quello meno che parrà alla sua coscienza, e con quelle figure che sono nel disegno.—P. MARCHESE, t. i, p. 235.

Beato Angelico was faithful to these conditions. He was lavish of his gold and skill: and it is one of his richest and most remarkable pictures. The Blessed Virgin is entirely covered with a blue mantle all embroidered with gold. She holds, standing upon her knees, the Child Jesus, who carries the world in his left hand, and blesses with his right. The Holy Ghost is hovering in the upper part. The background of the picture is spread with a magnificent curtain of cloth of gold. In the breadth of the frame, are painted twelve angels adoring and playing on various instruments. These angels are masterpieces of gracefulness and purity. We will especially point out the one clothed in a red robe and sounding a kind of crooked trumpet. On the little doors of this altar-piece, are represented, inside, S. John Baptist and S. Mark, and outside, S. Mark and S. Peter. S. Mark is on both sides, being patron of the flax-workers.

This picture is executed on a ground of gold, which must have produced a very happy effect in the place, doubtless a little obscure, where it was fixed. It is now too much lighted, and the painting appears too transparent. The gradino of this altar-piece is at the side, and represents three subjects.

1. The Preaching of S. Peter. S. Mark seems to be writing his sermon, to show that he wrote his gospel under the dictation of the chief of the Apostles.

2. A beautiful Adoration of the Magi.

3. The Martyrdom of S. Mark.

The Coronation of the Virgin, in the gallery of the Uffizi, is later than the one in the Museum of

the Louvre, and recalls many parts of it; but the composition is more airy and more heavenly. The scene takes place in the splendour of glory. From the centre, as from the bosom of God, golden rays issue and serve for the background of all the picture. Christ and his Mother are seated on light clouds. The Blessed Virgin is clothed in a blue mantle studded with small stars, her hands are crossed on her breast, and she bends down, with love and respect, towards her Son. The Saviour, vested in a blue mantle and bright red robe, is not crowning Mary, but stretches out his hand to add a magnificent diamond to her crown. What thought has inspired the artist? What privilege, what divine grace has he wished to represent by this diamond? We do not know. But could we not thus figure the honour which the Church is rendering to Mary, in proclaiming the dogma of the Immaculate Conception? Is not this the fairest jewel in the crown which God destined for her in His eternal designs? A troop of angels surround the Queen of Heaven, and celebrate her triumph with dances and concerts. To paint angels so beautiful, Beato Angelico must have seen them. He has heard their songs, and shared their joy, and he has reflected them in all these charming figures.

In the lower part of the picture, are disposed on clouds two groups of saints, male and female, reminding us of those in the Coronation at the Louvre. The chief ones are, S. Nicholas of Bari, S. Giles, S. Dominic, S. Jerome, S. Benedict, S. Peter and S. Paul. S. Dominic again holds a book and a lily, but the head is not the same, as it is a three-quarter face and bearded.

Amongst the female faints, are remarked, S. Mary Magdalen, S. Catherine of Alexandria, S. Catherine of Sienna, and one who carries a lighted lamp like the wise virgins. Near this group, is also found S. Stephen, protector of the weak, and S. Peter Martyr, patron of virginity. This masterpiece was executed for the Chartreuse at Florence.¹ We cannot forbear regretting that it is now in a museum, and that this picture, made for praying and meditating on heaven, is placed beside one of the saddest nudities of the Renaissance.

The same room possesses three other small pictures by Beato Angelico.

1. Zacharias writing the name of S. John Baptist. The woman holding the ink-horn is charmingly natural.²

2. The Marriage of the Blessed Virgin. This subject, which we have already seen at Cortona, recalls the fresco of Taddeo Gaddi, especially in the three principal personages. In the two compositions, a dove is placed on the blossomed branch of S. Joseph, to mark his purity.

3. The Death of the Virgin. The painter has followed the traditional composition. Our Lord holds the soul of the Holy Virgin, and blesses her body, which must soon be glorified in heaven. Angels are holding torches and censers; and the Apostles are ranged all

¹ Una delle prime opere che faceffe questo buon padre di pittura, fu nella Certosa di Fiorenza una tavola che fu posta nella maggior capella del cardinale degli Acciainoli. . . . Nella crociera di detta cappella sono due altre tavole di mano di medesimo; in una è la Incoronazione di nostra Donna.

² Lanzi loved this little picture very much: "La R. Galleria ne ha diversi, e il più gajo e finito è quello della Nascita del Batista."

around, with their names written in their aureolas. This august ceremony cannot be represented in a nobler and more solemn manner.

The gallery of the Pitti palace possesses only one picture by Beato Angelico. It is found in the Hall of Justice, No. 399, and calls to mind the first Madonnas of our painter, by its style and ogival shape. The Blessed Virgin is holding a gold vase, whence her Divine Son takes a piece of gold. By this pure metal, the painter has perhaps wished to express the most pure flesh, which the Word has taken in Mary's most pure womb. On the right, S. Dominic and S. John Baptist; on the left, S. Peter and S. Thomas Aquinas. In the three angles of the upper part, are represented, in the middle, the Crucifixion; and on each side, the Annunciation. In the arch which frames the ogives, are seen the Preaching and the Martyrdom of S. Peter, who is writing with his blood the first words of the Credo.

If the religious of Santa Maria Novella had lost the fervour and sanctity of their founders, they had preserved at least the artistic traditions. They still called for the most celebrated painters to decorate the walls raised by Fra Sisto and Fra Riforma. Simone Memmi, Orcagna and Taddeo Gaddi had enriched their church and cloisters with masterpieces, and they invited Beato Angelico to execute some pictures near those of these great men, whom he worthily succeeded. He worked there, doubtless, at the same time as Massaccio, who was so well qualified to understand and love his talent. Vasari tells us that he painted in fresco, in the transept of the church, in front of the choir-door,

S. Dominic, S. Catherine of Sienna and S. Peter Martyr, and some little pictures in the chapel of the Rosary. He also painted on canvas an Annunciation for the little doors of the old organ.¹ These paintings no longer exist; but there are still three pictures which adorned the reliquaries made by Giovanni Masi, a religious of the convent, who died in 1430.² The picture on another reliquary and the decoration of a paschal candle, spoken of by Vasari, have been lost.³

The first reliquary at Santa Maria Novella represents a Madonna standing, with a star over her head. The Child Jesus leans on her neck, and seems to be speaking to her, and lavishing his divine caresses: the Blessed Virgin is listening with a tender melancholy. In the upper part and almost outside the ogive framing it, the Saviour, surrounded by angels' heads, regards her and lets a crown fall upon her head. In the border, are painted angels offering their homage and incense to her. The two angels seated at her feet are fingering a little organ, and are separated by a beautiful vase of flowers. In the part serving as the base of the picture, are represented

¹ Dipinse dopo nel tramezzo di S. Maria Novella in fresco, accanto alla porta dirimpetto al coro S. Domenico, S. Caterina da Siena, e S. Pietro Martire, ed alcune storiette piccole nella capella dell' Incoronazione di nostra Donna, nel detto tramezzo. In tela fece nei portelli che chiudevano l'organo vecchio una Nunciata, che è oggi in convento dirimpetto alla porta del dormitorio da basso fra l'un chiofiro e l'altro.

² Habemus et multas plurimorum sanctorum reliquias, quas quidam Fr. Joannes Mafius Florentinus, multæ devotionis et taciturnitatis vir, in quatuor inclusit tabulas, quas Fr. Joannes Fefulanus pictor, cognomento Angelicus, pulcherrimis beatissimæ Mariæ Virginis et sanctorum Angelorum ornavit figuris. Obiit Fr. Joannes Mafius anno M cccc xxx.—BILIOTTI *Chronica*, MS., c. xix, p. 24.

³ In S. Maria Novella, oltre alle cose dette, dipinse di storie piccole il cereo pasquale, ed alcuni reliquiari che nelle maggiori solennità si pongono in full' altara.

S. Dominic; S. Peter Martyr; and S. Thomas Aquinas bearing a little church whence a light issues, to call to mind the eulogy of the sovereign pontiffs, who have proclaimed him *the Light of the Church*.

The second reliquary is divided into two parts, representing the Annunciation and the Adoration of the Magi, the homage of heaven and earth.

The Annunciation. The Holy Virgin is seated, with her arms crossed on her breast. She is receiving the salutation of the angel who inclines before her. Between the heavenly ambassador and Mary, who was to be mother of the Saviour, is placed a vase full of roses, out of which three beautiful lilies escape, in honour of her who was thrice virgin,—before, in, and after her delivery. In the upper part, is seen the youthful figure of our Saviour carrying the world, and advancing, preceded by the Holy Ghost.

The Adoration of the Magi. The Blessed Virgin, clothed in a magnificent mantle, presents the Child Jesus to the old Magian king, prostrate at his feet. S. Joseph is holding the present he is come to make. The two other kings wait for their turn. The personages of their suite are looking at the star, which appears above the roof of the rustic stable. All the background is ornamented with rich tapestry. This picture is executed with an admirable grace and purity.

In the part serving to support the picture, are sketched ten ravishing figures of female saints, and one of them, the Virgin embraced by her Son, occupies the centre.

The first is S. Catherine of Sienna, with the inscription, B. CATHERINA DI SEIS. She is represented hold-

ing a book in her right hand, and in her left a heart with a golden centre. Her mantle is black and veil white, like those of tertiaries. Her profile recalls the type we have remarked at the Louvre and in the gallery of the Uffizi. The picture is anterior to the canonization of this great saint, which took place in 1460; but the process of Venice made in 1411 for the Dominicans who celebrated her festival, had, so to say, authorized her cultus.

After S. Catherine, come S. Appollonia with the pincers, S. Margaret, S. Agatha carrying eyes in a vase, S. Mary Magdalen, S. Agnes, S. Cecilia, S. Dorothy with her mantle full of flowers, and S. Urfula with her arrow.

The third reliquary represents the Coronation of the Virgin, and recalls by its disposition the picture at the Louvre. The Holy Virgin, kneeling before her Son, is surrounded with angels; a great number of saints are grouped below the steps of the throne. To us, it is evident that this picture is not by Beato Angelico, but by Fra Benedetto. It suffices to compare it with the works of our painter, to comprehend the difference of talent in the two brothers. Here are seen a religious thought and a wish to follow his model; but the whole composition is wanting in order and space. The figures are heavy, the attitudes awkward, the proportions short, the outlines clumsy and the painting painful. On the pedestal, the same hand has represented the Child Jesus adored by the Holy Virgin and S. Joseph, in the midst of angels who are dancing and playing the tabour.

The Chapel of Painters dedicated to S. Luke, in

the cloister of the Nunciata, possesses six charming little pictures by Beato Angelico framed in the gradino of the altar. They were formerly placed at the bottom of the altar-piece made for the new church of the convent of San Marco, and represent the legend of S. S. Cosmas and Damian.

1. Palladia, being cured by the two physicians, presents a purse full of gold to S. Damian, who will not receive it.

2. S. S. Cosmas and Damian and their three brothers appear before the proconsul Lilius.

3. The two saints are cast into the sea, and are brought out by an angel.

4. They are condemned to the fire; the flames rush on the by-standers.

5. They are crucified, and the arrows intended to pierce them recoil on the executioners.

6. The five brothers are beheaded.

Vafari cites these pictures amongst the masterpieces of Beato Angelico, and says it is impossible to imagine anything executed with greater care, or figures more delicate or more judiciously conceived.¹ In fact, the poetry of the legends of the middle ages cannot be given in a happier manner. Beato Angelico preserved at Fiesole the freshness and gracefulness of his imagination, for all he was developing his talent by the study of the material progress which art was then making at Florence.

¹ See the text of Vafari, p. 166.



CHAPTER IX.

*BEATO ANGELICO AT FLORENCE.—HIS RELATIONS
WITH BRUNELLESCHI, Ghiberti AND MASSACIO.*



LORY had visited the cell of the humble religious; churches and princes contended for his masterpieces, and Cosimo de Medici, who particularly loved our painter, wished to have him near him, in the convent of San Marco, where he had established the reformed Dominicans of Fiesole. Beato Angelico was obliged to quit his dear solitude, and go to mingle in the artistic movement at Florence. He had certainly observed it already from the heights of his mountain, and had profited by it, but he now found himself more in connection with the celebrated artists of that time; and it is very important to examine what he did amidst their new tendencies.

The first half of the fifteenth century is perhaps the most interesting epoch of art. Then really began the

Renaissance, which has been the object of such contradictory appreciations: and at Florence must be studied the various elements that compose it. Beato Angelico knew how to distinguish and choose them out; and his example must be followed by all who desire a better future for Christian art.

Three contemporaries of Beato Angelico may be regarded as the fathers of the Renaissance, and they are Brunelleschi, Ghiberti and Masaccio. To them, architecture, sculpture and painting owe a new direction. We proceed to examine in what it was favourable or prejudicial, and will seek the truth amidst extreme opinions, at the risk, perhaps, of not conciliating any one. Architecture, sculpture and painting are three means of art which must not be separated from each other, any more than the thought of the orator from his word and gesture. They have always been closely united during the great epochs of art, and their tendency to separation has been one of the chief defects of the Renaissance. Still architecture has always preserved a certain paramount influence: the sculptor and painter are set off by the architect. The architect is the leader of the orchestra, who conducts the concert.

To comprehend the influence of Brunelleschi at Florence, it is necessary to know what was the state of architecture before him.

Every nation has its architecture, because every nation has its character, scenery and different materials, which explain the diversities of forms investing the same doctrines. These diversities are very striking in the Italian Republics of the middle ages,

although they were so near together. Florence, Sienna, Perugia, Pisa and Bologna have not the same monuments, and their monuments always harmonize with the type of their population. Man, as God does, leaves his stamp and image on his works. Every national architecture, in its regular developement, creates three styles corresponding to the three periods we have marked out in art: the hieratic, the learned and the naturalistic periods.¹ Form is successively developed, just as human thought expresses itself, first by affirmation, then by precision, and at length by the embellishment of imagery. Thence three styles of architecture, the chief qualities of which are simplicity, elegance, or richness. These three styles have received in Greece the name of the people whose genius they best represented, and have been called the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian orders. These orders are distinguished by the embellishments, and especially by the proportions. Vitruvius has given the standard of these proportions; but this standard has nothing absolute, for genius cannot be imprisoned within invariable limits. The proportions of the Parthenon, the masterpiece of ancient art, do not agree with the ciphers of Roman architecture. The columns themselves are not equal between them. The artist acts on matter with the liberty of the Creator, who, in nature, is pleased to vary the geometrical forms of flowers.

Roman art has gone through the three phases we are about to point out. Under Greek influence, it

¹ See page 5.

has passed from the Tuscan to the Composite style. In regard to the nations of the middle ages, united by the Church in relations not to be slighted when we wish to study the history of art, architecture has followed the same rules with greater or less rapidity, according to circumstances and countries. An original architecture is raised on the ruins of the ancient monuments; its first form becomes developed from Charlemagne until the Crusades, and is the Romanesque style. It then appears elegant and noble in the reigns of Philippe Auguste and St. Louis. It has at last displayed its richness down to the years of the decadence preceding the Renaissance. These three epochs correspond with the three Greek styles.

We regret that we are unable to examine at greater lengths the connections between ancient and mediæval architecture. We will only say that if Greek architecture attained perfection within a narrow sphere, Christian architecture developed a vaster doctrine and greater liberty with more powerful results. Its styles are not defined by columns and capitals, but by more general characteristics and more varied ornaments. Its most perfect style, uniting in an admirable elegance the simplicity of the first epoch with the richness of the third, has lasted throughout all the Crusades, and has employed two different forms, the rounded arch and the ogive.¹ These two styles, dialects of the same language, are interesting for the study of our subject. Some have wished to establish a rivalry or antagonism between them: and the ogive has had, in these latter

¹ The Ogive is designated by English writers, the *Pointed Style*. [TRANSLATOR'S note.]

times, as passionate admirers as it formerly had unjust detractors. Some enthusiasts have wished to see in it the exclusive and absolute set-form of Christian architecture, and the greatest reproach they make against the Renaissance is for having abandoned it. Brunelleschi is the first culprit, and we shall see if Beato Angelico has not been his accomplice.

What is the origin of the ogive? A great deal has been said on this question, which has long been a butt for the reveries of poets and for the erudition of the learned.¹ The former seek its origin in forest shades, the latter have given the honour of it to the genius of the East, whilst archæologists have been willing to assign it a place, name and date glorious to their own country. For our part, ogival architecture is no more an imitation of forests than it is a foreign importation, nor is it the patented invention of any individual. It is the natural developement of the rounded arch, not belonging to any one in particular, but settled and perfected by artists in general. What is a monument, a work of architecture? It is an assemblage of lines, straight or curved, perpendicular or horizontal, combined so as to produce an impression on man. For a church particularly, it is a means, an optical effect created by the artist. The ogive and the rounded arch produce different effects; but we say that the effect of the ogive or pointed arch has been suggested by the very effect of the semicircular arch. Ogival

¹ M. l'Abbé Bourassé, in his *Archéologie chrétienne*, chap. x, has thoroughly summed up and determined the opinions of the learned on the origin of the ogive. This excellent manual has very much contributed in France to spread the study of our old monuments. A good elementary work is one of the greatest services which could be rendered to the science.

architecture is the legitimate offspring of Romanesque architecture. With us its name is the certificate of its birth.

Whilst erecting churches in the rounded style, architects employed stone arches to support the ridges of the vaulted roofs. These supports were called *ogives*, and the curves of these ogives, by meeting at right angles, gave in geometry and perspective all the variations of the equilateral arch. If a person is placed under the vaults of a church in the rounded style of the twelfth century, he will experience the same optical effect as in an ogival church. The only line interrupting the upward tendency of the lines is the principal arch which separates the bays. This arch, in the rounded style, becomes pointed by degrees, first in the arch of the sanctuary, then in the arches of the nave, either as a means of construction for diminishing the pressure of the roof, or for unity and harmony, because the pointed arch agrees better with the tracery of the ogival windows. The pointed arch is also placed upon the rounded arch, which separates the nave from the aisles, just as in the same monument the Ionic order has been placed upon the Doric, because what supports must be simpler and stronger than what is supported. These two different styles do not destroy unity, but only give to the eye the impression of greater height, like the lessening dimensions of a column.

The pointed arch or ogive has thus been naturally and progressively systematized in architecture, and to explain it we have no need of recourse to a foreign importation, or to a local and individual invention.

The adoption of the ogival style was not effected in Italy as in France and Germany. Architecture was less rapidly and freely developed there, because it was more tied to imitating ancient edifices better preserved than in other countries.

The rounded arch was an Italian creation, and the employment of it forms the difference between the architectures of Rome and Athens. It was precisely the Etruscans, forefathers of the Florentines, who introduced it into Rome, whilst building the earliest monuments there. The North had still an influence on the architecture of Italy in the middle ages. In our opinion, the finest church of the ancient Republic of Florence is San Miniato, evidently built by German artists during the omnipotence of the empire.

In Italy, the ogive is an importation due to the triumph of the architects of the North, in the competition opened to the whole of Europe for the church to crown the tomb of S. Francis of Assisi. It is an exotic plant which languishes in a foreign land. James of Germany, after he had raised his masterpiece, went to Florence, where he worked for the Republic, and died in 1360. He founded a school, and the best pupils of it were the Dominicans, Fra Sisto and Fra Ristoro, who built Santa Maria Novella, the *Bride* of Michael Angelo.

Arnolfo di Lapo, who was the son of James of Germany, as many learned think,¹ did not manage the ogive with the same liberty as the architects of the North did. He was pre-occupied with the great masses

¹ Lapo might be the Tuscan diminutive of Jacopo.

of the ancient basilicas, and his chief works (Santa Croce and Santa Maria dei Fiori) cannot be compared with the other ogival churches of Tuscany. They have neither the gracefulness of the cathedral of Sienna, nor the richness of San Martino at Lucca, nor the character so imposing of Santa Petrona at Bologna. Their façade has not been finished: it seems that the national impulse had failed. Santa Croce, in the huge ogives of which are encased the pagan tombs raised by the Florentines to their great men, with its bare beams resembles an unfinished church. Its beauty is altogether in the fine line of chapels at the farther end, which dazzles the eyes by the glare of the large glass windows. Santa Maria dei Fiori is gigantic; but the effect of the interior, which is the most important in Christian architecture, is not happy: the light does not lighten up the bareness of the walls. It is true Arnolfo did not finish it, but left the central part to be crowned by Brunelleschi. The exterior is decorated rather by a painter than by an architect. The ancients set off the details of their architecture with colour; but this was only a secondary means, and they gave deep shadows to their masses and profile. The exterior of Santa Maria dei Fiori is an inlaid work of marble, and the merit of it disappears at a distance. The influence of the artist is felt, to whom is attributed the Campanile, much inferior to the Tower of Pisa, the work of a German architect. The Campanile at Florence has beautiful details and great elevation, but it seems to us to be as wanting in basement as in crowning. The masterpiece of the school of Giotto is the

Loggia, by Orcagna, which has the rounded arch, and takes on the national style again.

Brunelleschi came at a moment when all artists were passionately studying ancient monuments, and he had to choose between the ogive and the rounded arch. His studies and genius made him prefer the rounded arch. He was fettered in the completion of Santa Maria dei Fiori; he went back to study the monuments of Rome, and wished to place the cupola of the Pantheon over the ogives of Arnolfo. He wrought perhaps a greater architectural miracle than that of Michael Angelo in the dome of S. Peter's, but the interior effect in his work is to be lamented; for the clear light of Florence never penetrates there, and the great offices have to be celebrated by candle-light.¹ Brunelleschi was not in his element, and returned to the rounded arch. His masterpiece is the church of San Spirito. He resumed the ancient Latin basilica, and wished to give it all the elegance and lightness of ogival churches, whilst wholly preserving the ancient forms and natural traditions. We believe that he was right, and that this Renaissance in architecture has been legitimate. It has been a progress on the anarchy and decline caused by the introduction of a foreign architecture, like as the Italian Renaissance was, in our opinion, a progress for French architecture led away by Flemish influence and the shamelessness of the fifteenth century. Moreover, architecture, by its contact with pagan art, has to fear corruption less than sculpture and painting have, because it is not so easily given over to

¹ We have seen the choir-books lighted at the High Mass on Ascension-day.

individual caprice and passions. We believe that the era of Brunelleschi has been the great epoch in the architecture of Florence.

Has Ghiberti rendered the same service to sculpture? He had the same taste for the study of the antique; but his passion for form made him forget the great traditions of Christian art. The march of his talent is seen in his gates of the Baptistry at Florence. Those made by him, in addition to the ones by Andrea Pisano, harmonize with the lines of the architecture, but they have not the noble and simple style of his rival, whose compositions remind us of the skill and purity of the Greek bas-reliefs. His figures project too much: still his vivacity is kept within bounds, and he gives every liberty to his genius in the central gate. We cannot, indeed, grow weary in admiring the unheard of luxury in ornamenting there displayed, that vigorous modelling, those little ancient statues, that marvellous chasing which time seems desirous to respect. The compositions on the panels are very remarkable, the groups are excellent, the proportions elegant and the draperies graceful. Raphael must have studied them a great deal. But we cannot equally praise the landscape grounds. Instead of some simple lines serving to frame-in the figures, the sculptor has modelled trees, deepenings and mountains, and has led his art away into the domain of painting. To sum up, we cannot say, with Michael Angelo, that these are worthy of being the gates of Paradise,¹ for the artist made them for his own and not for God's

¹ Elle son tanto belle, ch' elle starebbon bene alle porte del paradiso.—VASARI, *Vita di Lorenzo Ghiberti*.

glory, and has fought to give rather beautiful forms than holy thoughts; but we look on them as the principal work of the Renaissance, and the richest ornament of the temple which the sixteenth century would raise to natural beauty. Donatello followed in the same way as Ghiberti. The Christian sentiment disappeared in his singing and dancing children, and he replaces it by simplicity of expression and the gracefulness of youth. It is a nature that suffers itself to be carried away by earthly passions, but still preserves the charm of bashfulness. Lucca della Robbia better resisted being dragged along by his epoch, and remained religious and popular in his works.

Massaccio represents the progress of the Renaissance in painting: it is he that profited most by the example of Ghiberti. Two principal works show how far he went: his paintings in the church of San Clemente at Rome, and in the chapel of the Carmine at Florence. Massaccio, too, went to visit the Eternal City; and, as with Brunelleschi and the other artists of his epoch, it was no longer to pray at the tomb of S. Peter and of the martyrs, but to admire the ruins and divinities of the heathen world. When he arrived, he was still the man of Christian traditions; all the poetry of them is found again in his History of S. Catherine of Alexandria. He is worthy to be compared with Beato Angelico for the purity of his talent. But when he returns to Florence, his mind is changed, and he carries off the idea of a material perfection, which he pursues and attains in the chapel of the Carmine.

This chapel is a celebrated date in history, because for painting it marked out the advent of the Renais-

fance. The oldest part was done by Maffolino da Panicale, and the subjects he represented are, Adam and Eve driven out of the earthly paradise; S. Peter healing the cripple at the Temple and raising S. Petronilla from the dead; S. Peter visited in prison by S. Paul. In them, a noble and austere style is admired, as a memorial of the great school of Giotto; but there is found, too, a real progress in design, colouring, and *chiaroscuro*, and a visible prepossession to struggle against the ancients in painting the nude. The figure of S. Paul is worthy of Raphael.

Maffaccio continued the work of his fellow-pupil Maffolino, and painted, on both sides of the altar, the preaching of S. Peter, the shadow of S. Peter curing the sick, and S. Peter giving alms and administering baptism. Vasari is in ecstasy at the nude man who is being baptised, and points him out for the admiration of all.¹

But the masterpiece of Maffaccio is the Payment of the Tribute, which is in the upper part. In the centre, Christ sends Peter to catch the fish to furnish the tribute; and on the right, S. Peter delivers the money to the young man who demands it. This composition can be compared with the beautiful cartoons of Raphael. The style is noble, the figures well drawn and the draperies full and natural. The play of expressions is also very remarkable; but a religious sentiment must not be sought there. The

¹ Nell' istoria dove S. Piero battezza si stima grandemente un ignudo, che triema tra gli altri battezzati, affiderando di freddo, condotto con bellissimo rilievo e dolce maniera, il quale dagli artefici e vecchi e moderni è stato sempre tenuto in riverenza ed ammirazione.

artist gets the start of the Christian. At the lower part of the scene, Massacio has represented the resurrection of a young man at the intercession of S. Peter. He had not time to finish this painting, and all the spectators placed near the gate of the town are by Filippino, son of Fra Lippi, whose fall symbolizes that of Christian art. The talent of Filippino is already a decline; S. Peter delivered out of Prison, and S. Peter and S. Paul before the Proconsul, tell of the exclusive study of the antique, and the desire of making portraits to procure friends and patrons. The whole of this chapel gives a glimpse of the anarchy which the new tendency of art must cause. It is no longer a poem conceived with unity, but an open competition, wherein each one seeks the means of making his talent valued. The aim of the artist is no longer to inspire the crowd with noble and pious sentiments, but all his ambition is to flatter the taste and obtain the suffrage of connoisseurs. And this ambition is a cause of ruin, because, for art as well as for society, true progress lies only in moral perfection.

The three artists we have named as the fathers of the Renaissance were contemporary with Beato Angelico. They must have loved him as a genius who could not give them umbrage, and often visited his cell, when our painter went to settle at Florence. Brunelleschi was then erecting his cupola at Santa Maria dei Fiori; Ghiberti had finished his gates of the Baptistry, and was working on other masterpieces; Massolino was dead, and Massacio was painting his chapel of the Carmine.

Beato Angelico, their match, regarded them, without

doubt, as his masters, and profited by their progress, whilst he still preserved the great principles of Christian art. This is seen in the works of which we have already spoken or which remain for us to study. He understood the happy revolution brought about in architecture by Brunelleschi, and did not think the ogive more Christian than the rounded arch; for we see him abandoning the mediæval designs with which he had decorated his early pictures, to adopt the lines and ornamenting of the new monuments of Florence. His figures continued to be no less holy: they only took on less lengthened proportions, whilst wholly retaining their nobleness, because the style of architecture always affects the figures.

He was certainly capable of understanding all the beauties of the gates of the Baptistry of Florence, and he knew how to rival Ghiberti in grace and elegance; but for all that he did not neglect the expression of religious feelings; and that made him preferred before his rival for the altarpiece ordered by the Guild of flax-workers [joiners].

Without doubt, many place Massaccio above Beato Angelico for perfection of form, because they consider the science rather than the Christian inspiration; but even in that regard we do not find Beato Angelico inferior to his contemporary.

The chapel of San Clemente is not to be compared with the paintings we have already studied, and we believe it, above all, to be less beautiful than the chapel of Nicholas V, in the Vatican. As to the composition in the chapel of the Carmine, we think that it cannot be preferred to most of the works of Beato Angelico,

whose Last Judgments especially offer first-rate beauties. Massaccio resembles Raphael more in the freedom and elegance of his figures; but Beato Angelico has a grandeur and style he had from tradition, which often bring him nearer to the Greeks than Raphael himself.

Thus Beato Angelico, model of all artists for the holiness of his inspirations, is also their model for the form with which he knew how to clothe those inspirations. He assisted at the first appearance of the Renaissance. He disentangled what it had of progress towards natural beauty, but remained faithful to moral beauty. He not allowed himself to go astray through desire of personal glory, and saw in the beauties of earth only the reflection of the beauties of heaven: he loved God, and desired to make Him loved. This was his highest aim, and because he was faithful to it, his talent has been preserved from all decay.



CHAPTER X.

*FOUNDATION OF THE CONVENT OF SAN MARCO
BY COSIMO DE MEDICI.—CHOIR-BOOKS BY FRA
BENEDETTO.*



THE convent of San Marco was founded and protected by the Medici, who grew great with the Renaissance, of which they were to become the corruptors. It is interesting for the history of art to examine how these bankers purchased Florence by degrees, and ended by becoming its masters. Never was usurpation more mild and in appearance more happy.

Pope Innocent III, who has done so much for the liberty of Italy, had aided Florence to shake off the tyranny of the emperors. This city formed itself into a republic, and the fourteenth century was a turbulent period for it, but full of glory and prosperity. The form of government often changed, through the

stormy sedition of the democracy and the strifes of a turbulent aristocracy; but the popular element always predominated. Weary, at times, of the rending of anarchy, Florence sought some repose, by entrusting power to foreign princes, a means which never reunited it.

In 1267, it gave itself, for ten years, to Charles I, King of Sicily, but soon renounced this protectorate. In 1301, Pope Boniface VIII. sent to it, as governor, Charles de Valois, brother of the King of France, who, instead of re-establishing peace, organized pillage and enkindled the fire of civil war. In 1342, the Florentines nominated Gauthier de Brienne, Duke of Athens, as captain and protector of the people, and afterwards lord of Florence for life; but his odious tyranny caused him to be driven out in the following year. Then the struggles of the people began afresh against the nobility, who sought in power means only to satisfy private hatreds. The citizens triumphed, and the nobles were excluded from every charge; and a government was established, the peculiar combinations of which gave great development to private energy and public wealth. The system of guilds of art was exceedingly favourable to commerce and industry. Florence became the emporium of Europe, and its manufactures supplied every country; for woollen stuffs, it reckoned two hundred manufacturers, who employed thirty thousand persons. Its revenues were considerable, and its unpaid magistrates amassed treasures which enabled them to pay off the troops, purchase towns, found public establishments, and organize festivals, to which strangers resorted in crowds. The fine arts also flourished: this

was the epoch of the school of Giotto and of the great monuments. An unheard-of luxury bred a corruption of manners, which the plague of 1348 chastised, when a hundred thousand persons died in Florence.

Amidst this feverish agitation of industry, the influence of the bankers grew very considerable. They treated on an equality with crowned heads. The King of England borrowed 900,000 florins of gold from the Bradi and 600,000 of the Perruzzi. The august debtor did not pay, and ruined his bankers. The Medici were more prudent and more clever. They chose less exalted and surer clients, and made partisans for themselves amongst the people and citizens. Sylvestro de Medici is the first illustrious member of his family; he was created cavaliere by the revolted workmen, and was nominated gonfaloniere by them in 1378.

Whilst the nobles were returning to power by their alliances with the rich citizens, and Florence was increasing in prosperity under Gino Capponi and Maso Albrizzi, the Medici were extending their business without mixing up in the ambitious contentions of parties. Giovanni de Medici, in particular, made enormous profits during the Council of Constance. He was banker to the Pope, and profited by the circumstance to acquire immense credit throughout all the world. He was the true founder of his dynasty. His courtesy towards the rich and generosity towards artisans commenced his power, and he attracted general esteem and knew how to keep himself adroitly in neutrality. In 1421, he was nominated to the office of gonfaloniere, which he honourably fulfilled; and he died in 1428, leaving to his children, his credit, his fortune, and the

recommendation of never having offended anybody, and of always respecting the laws and will of his fellow-citizens.

Cosimo de Medici profited most by his lessons. To the ability of his father, he joined greater ambition, and he sought every means to advance his influence, by increasing his riches and enterprises. Active, generous and insinuating, he grew to be the friend and creditor of all the world. He attached to himself the families of the exiled by means of bills of exchange, received the money of the condottieri and made advances to them, protected letters and the arts, and surrounded himself with all who could have an influence on the public spirit. He took the artisans into his pay, by furnishing funds to industry, and his bounty relieved the poor and decorated churches, whilst he remained himself in a comparative simplicity, which is always seductive under a republic.

The nobles, who saw his power increasing and consolidating, conspired to overturn it. Renaud, son of Mazo Albizzi, prepared an insurrection instead of an assassination. Cosimo was arrested and condemned, but in his prison he bought the judges over who were sold to his enemies, and instead of being sent to death, he departed only into exile. There was his triumph. He retired to Padua, and there received deputations from those who acknowledged his power. The city of Venice sent ambassadors to him, and asked his counsels. All the vassals commerce had given him came to pay him homage, whilst Florence suffered all through by his absence. He demanded his capitals back; it was necessary to repay them, and they could not borrow

any more : industry flagged, artists had no longer a protector nor artisans a patron. The city was compelled to capitulate. Then the reign of the Medici began.

Cosimo was a sovereign without taking the titles and costly equipage of one. He was proclaimed the benefactor of the people and the father of the country : he commanded, he revenged, he governed. His banking-house was his palace, his cash-box his throne ; and he established the royalty of money, the tyranny of riches—a tyranny more terrible than any other, because it is more corruptive. It was a system well organized by him ; and when they complained of the injury he inflicted on the city by the loss of good citizens whom his banishments and revenges drove away, he boasted that he could make good men with two ells of superfine cloth.

He knew how to profit by the talent and warlike qualities of Neri Capponi, whose independence he respected in order to gain an influence by his means over the soldiery. He allowed the soldiers to tyrannize over the people, that his own apparent moderation might be more valued, and he hurried on industry towards luxury, a material progress which is a danger when it is not guided by Christianity. He gathered also a brilliant circle of learned men and artists, heaped presents on churches, founded numerous convents and neglected no means to conciliate the masses.

The country-house of Cosimo de Medici was near the convent of Fiesole, and he became the benefactor of the religious inhabiting it. He had ordered many pictures by Beato Angelico, and he caused him to remove to the new convent of San Marco. God thus always

mingles good and evil, to let us choose between these two eternal enemies, and to perpetuate, amidst the ruins of corruption, the germs of life and the hopes of resurrection. Providence placed not far from the palace of the Medici the holy dwelling, where the inexhaustible charity of S. Antoninus was to console the victims of the vengeance of Cosimo the elder, and to solace the misery bred by the excess of luxury. From the convent of San Marco was also to issue forth Savonarola, that tribune of the Church, who desired to direct towards God the progress of the Renaissance, which was becoming more and more corrupted in the service of the passions under the fatal influence of Lorenzo il Magnifico.

The religious of Fiesole had already sent a colony to Florence. On June 19th, 1435, they had obtained of Pope Eugenius IV, and the magistracy of the city, the small church of San Giorgio beyond the Arno. The Sovereign Pontiff was then prosecuting the reform of the religious orders, in which the schism and the plague had caused relaxation. The religious who gave most scandal were those who inhabited the old convent of San Marco.¹ A petition from the magistrates of Florence was presented to the Pope by Cosimo de Medici, asking for a change. It set forth that the convent of San Marco, situated in the centre of the city, had need of zealous and numerous ministers; and that those who were occupying it could not do any good and were allowing the buildings to fall into ruins. The reformed Dominican religious were to take the place of them, and give in exchange the convent of San Giorgio, which was being granted them. Eugenius IV

¹ [Monks of the Order of S. Sylvester.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

received this request favourably; and a bull dated January 21st, 1436, ordained the change. The monks of San Marco resisted, and appealed to the pseudo-synod of Basle, one of the precursive lightning flashes of the Reformation. But this means did not succeed with them; they were obliged to give up, and the Pope ordered that possession should be taken with unusual solemnity. The Dominican religious went through all the city, accompanied by the clergy, three bishops, the mazzieri and an immense concourse of people. Padre Cipriano took possession of San Marco in the name of his congregation.

Beato Angelico assisted, without any doubt, at the ceremony, and settled in the convent, which was in a deplorable state. In the preceding year, a fire had destroyed a part, and the roof of the church had been burned. The Dominican religious were obliged to make wooden cells all open to the wind and damp. But Cosimo de Medici ordered his architect, Michelozzi, to build them a more suitable abode. The architect pulled down the old convent, and left only the church and the refectory. He made two cloisters, one on the south side of the church, and the other at the apse. These buildings, commenced in 1437, were finished in 1443, and the expense amounted to 36,000 ducats. The restorations of the church were finished in 1441, and the consecration took place on the Feast of the Epiphany in the following year, in the presence of Pope Eugenius IV. and of the college of Cardinals. Cosimo de Medici wished to present all the choir-books, and charged Fra Benedetto, elder brother of Beato Angelico, with the execution of them.

We have seen that the two brothers, until this time, had the same existence, and we have proved the joint labour of Fra Benedetto in the works of our painter. The testimony of Vasari on this point is positive.¹ Fra Benedetto was particularly beloved by S. Antoninus, who chose him as sub-prior every time he himself was nominated prior of San Marco. He lived in that convent with his brother, and quitted it only when he was elected prior by the religious of Fiesole; but the third year of his charge was not yet completed, when he died of the plague, in 1448. The two chronicles of San Marco and of Fiesole eulogise his talent and sanctity.

“Fra Benedetto,” says the one of San Marco, “son of Pietro of Mugello, native son and then prior of the convent of Fiesole, brother of Fra Giovanni, that admirable painter from whose skill almost all the pictures of this convent proceed. Blessed (*Benedictus*) in reality and name, he was most upright in life and manners, and he conversed in the Order without a murmur. He was also the best writer and miniaturist, not only of his own but of most times. By whose hand are the texts, music-notes and miniatures of nearly all the choir-books of this church of San Marco, including the antiphonaries, graduals and psalters, except only the last gradual for festivals. Being seized with the plague, and having cheerfully looked on death, after duly receiving the sacraments, he fell asleep in the Lord that year, 1448, and was buried in the common sepulture of the brethren. May he rest in peace!”²

¹ Ben è vero che a far questi fu aiutata da un suo maggior fratello che era similmente miniatore ed essai esercitato nella pittura.

² Fra Benedictus Petri de Mugello, filius natus et tunc prior existens Fesulani conventus, germanus fratris Joannis, illius tam mirandi pictoris cujus arte picturæ

We have already compared the talent of Fra Benedetto with his brother's ; the study of the choir-books at San Marco will make us better appreciate the difference. Fra Benedetto did not give himself up exclusively to the practice of the art ; but was very much occupied in the ministry and in the direction of souls, as is proved by the duties to which he was called. Still the regularity of religious life left him much leisure, seeing that he assisted his brother, and almost entirely executed in a few years, from 1443 to 1448, the choir-books, which serve the church of San Marco, and cost Cosimo de Medici 1500 ducats.

These magnificent books are one of the most valuable texts of ancient religious music. The annals of the convent say that fourteen volumes of graduals and antiphonaries were written by the hand of Fra Benedetto, prior of the convent of Fiesole, except the last volumes of the graduals for the ferias, which remained uncompleted on account of his death, and were finished by a religious of the order of Friar-minors. At the request of Cosimo, he also wrote two choir psalters and a book of invitatories.¹

The books now serving the religious are twenty in number, either because they have been divided, or

fere omnes hujus conventus exstant. Hic re et nomine Benedictus moribus et vitâ integerrimus fuit et sine querelâ in ordine conversatus. Exstitit autem excellentissimus, non modo suorum, sed et plurimorum temporum scriptor et miniator. Cujus manu, litteris, cantus nota, et minio fit. (*sic*) omnes fere libri chori hujus ecclesiæ S. Marci : Antiphonaria videlicet, Gradualia, et Psalteria, dempto ultimo duntaxat festivo graduali. Hic ex eâ peste invasus alacer mortem intuitus, sacramentis omnibus rite perceptis, in Domino requievit, ipso anno 1448, sepultus in communibus fratrum sepulturis. Requiescat in pace.—*Annalia conv. S. Marci*, A, fol. 211.

¹ *Annal. conv. S. Marci*, fol. 8, a tergo.

others have been added to them. These books have been repaired in the sixteenth century: the miniatures in them are generally well preserved. They bear the arms of the Medici; and numerous inscriptions give proof of the munificence of Cosimo the old. The writing is beautiful; the initials are a little heavy in design, but encircled with flowers and some grotesque figures. The miniatures are painted within the letters. The volumes most ornamented are the first marked A and B.¹ The following are the most remarkable subjects.

The Calling of S. Peter and S. Andrew.

The Martyrdom of S. Stephen. The background presents a charming landscape.

S. John the Evangelist. A beautiful figure, but unfortunately injured.

The Massacre of the Innocents.

S. Agnes, virgin and martyr. She is carrying amidst the flames her palm and symbolical lamb.

The Conversion of S. Paul. The Presentation. The Annunciation.

Then follows the common of the Apostles and Martyrs. Jesus blesses them, to show that he is their strength and reward.

At the common of a virgin, virgins of every age are singing before an open book laid upon the palms. In it are read these words: GAUDEAMUS OMNES.

For the office of the Cross is a very beautiful Crucifixion, seemingly done by Beato Angelico. Another miniature represents the Blessed Virgin covering with her mantle the religious of the Order of S. Dominic.

¹ At the beginning is read:—*Hos libros suis pecuniis, illustrissimus civis . . . multa et magna beneficia, et hoc templum extruxit Cosmas Medic.*

In the second volume, marked B, may be especially pointed out, an Annunciation, in beautiful style: S. Peter of Verona receiving the three crowns of doctor, virgin and martyr. S. Mary Magdalen carried to heaven by angels. S. Dominic receiving his mission from S. Peter and S. Paul. A magnificent Assumption. A very remarkable S. Michael. All the Saints, who are celebrating their festival whilst singing *CANTATE DOMINUM*.

In another composition, Christ places his hand on the head of a martyr, and with the other shows him the heavenly rewards, which he is contemplating with the eyes of faith.

The other books are not rich in miniatures. The greater part have one only at the first page. The Antiphonary marked I, presents a beautiful composition. Our Lord is showing to his apostles a young man with his eyes bandaged and his hands tied behind his back: such is the lot awaiting them, and also the surest means to conquer the world, whilst rendering testimony to the truth. The Book P presents a very fine Adoration of the Magi, the figures of which recall Beato Angelico's masterpiece in the cell of Cosimo de Medici.

All these miniatures exhibit defects and qualities already pointed out in the pictures we have attributed to Fra Benedetto. There are found in them a profound religious feeling, a pious imagination, new subjects and ingenious manner of giving them; but if the artist has the same faith and the same piety as his brother, he has not the same talent; he has received less and improved less. He is not, as Beato Angelico, the inheritor of the great masters, nor has he, like him

studied nature. His figures are dumpy and ordinarily badly placed, the movements untrue, and the heads without vivacity and pattern. But above all, he has not the noble elegance and admirable simplicity of his brother: evident proof that the Christian idea alone does not make the artist; to give it well, a natural gift developed by study is needed.

We insist very strongly on this distinction between the works of Fra Benedetto and Beato Angelico. The joint labour of Fra Benedetto has been prejudicial to the glory of Beato Angelico. But by studying attentively the works, which, without any doubt, belong to them, we come to recognize an evident inequality of style. They are two handwritings which it is impossible to confound.

Did Beato Angelico work at his brother's miniatures? We believe so, and have remarked figures worthy of him. Beato Angelico certainly made miniatures. Vasari attributes to him two large books at Santa Maria dei Fiori.¹ Padre Marchese could not see them; but Professor Rosini seems to have been more fortunate. The library of San Marco possesses other miniatures ascribed to him; but we think it is necessary to be careful in these assignments. Beato Angelico is pre-eminently the religious painter. Speculation or unskilled admiration gives to him a multitude of manuscripts of the fifteenth century, French or German. Let us respect the truth, and the glory of our painter.

¹ Sono di mano di Fra Giovanni in Santa-Maria-del-Fiore due grandissimi libri miniati divinamente, i quali sono tenuti con molta venerazione e riccamente adornati, nè si veggiono se non ne' giorni solennissimi.



CHAPTER XI.

CONVENT OF SAN MARCO.—PAINTINGS IN THE CLOISTER AND IN THE CELLS.



THE convent of San Marco is noble and simple in architecture. S. Antoninus moderated the liberality of Cofimo de Medici, and prevented grandeurs too much opposed to the spirit of the reformed Dominicans. The skill of Machelozzi is shown only in the two cloisters and in the library which is divided into three by two rows of fine Doric pillars. Beato Angelico worked only in the first cloister and in the cells connected with it. The rest of the convent was not finished before his departure or Rome.¹

¹ This first cloister is called the cloister of S. Antoninus, on account of the pictures representing the life of the faintly Archbishop of Florence, which were executed at the end of the sixteenth century.

[A great many, and certainly the most perfect of these frescoes, designed and coloured by M. Laborde, have been published in Paris, "Fresque du Couvent de Saint Marc, à Florence; par Beato Angelico da Fiefole, dessinées sur les Originaux par M. H. de Laborde, et reproduites en Chromo-Lithographie, par les Procédés de M. M. Englemann et Graff, par MM. Moulin, Blanke, Colette, et

At the end of the side of the cloister running along the church and facing the entrance door, is a beautiful Christ on the Cross. According to his custom, Beato Angelico has represented him with eyes open on all men, and shedding on the ground his divine blood flowing from its inexhaustible source. S. Dominic on his knees embraces the Cross and looks on our Lord with love and compassion. This figure is impressed with a most marked individuality. It must be the portrait of some religious, which was afterwards made into a S. Dominic, by the addition of the aureola and star of the holy Founder. Whose portrait is it? Is it one of S. Antoninus, Fra Benedetto, or Beato Angelico? We have no authentic portrait of our painter. But cannot we allow a supposition, and believe that he desired to represent himself at the foot of the Cross, as he placed himself so often there? His brother might have drawn the profile, and this act of ardent adoration would be the signature of all his works on the walls of the convent of San Marco. If these are not his features, they are at least his feelings, and he has written them at the bottom of this picture. In place of his name is read this touching inscription: "Hail! Salvation of the world: hail! dear Jesus, my Salvation; I would truly fix me to Thy Cross. Thou knowest wherefore; grant me power."¹

Near this painting, and above the door leading to the sacristy, Beato Angelico has painted in an ogive a

Sanfon, sous la Direction de M. Paul Delaroche; précédés d'une Notice Historique sur Beato Angelico, par Ludovic Vitel."—MARCHESE, by *Meehan*, vol. i, p. 210 (note.)—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

¹ Salve, mundi salutare; salve, salus Jesu chare; Cruci tuæ me aptare vellem verè: tu scis quare; presta mihi copiam.

S. Peter Martyr. In the left hand he holds a book and palm; and the forefinger of his right hand placed on his mouth enjoins the silence which should reign in the cloister and the recollection necessary for approaching the sanctuary.¹

Above the door of the chapter-room, a S. Dominic holds a discipline and the book of the constitutions. Can any one better point out the room where the religious meet to accuse themselves publicly of their faults against the rule and to receive the penance for it?

Near the door leading to the refectory, is painted a Pietà. The Saviour above his tomb shows his hands pierced for men. This is one of the most beautiful figures of Christ by Beato Angelico. The head is of a divine purity, the body of very noble and very remarkable drawing. Over the door of the hospice where strangers were entertained, Beato Angelico has represented two Dominican religious receiving our Lord Jesus Christ clothed as a pilgrim. This composition is admirable, and perfectly expresses the kindly hospitality, the tradition of which, as we ourselves know, is not lost in the Order of S. Dominic. The two religious receive their guest with joy and love: their heads, well drawn and well modelled, are full of life and charity.² To express the same idea, Fra Bartolomeo has painted the Disciples at

¹ ["Over the door that leads to the sacristy he executed a half-figure of S. Peter Martyr, indicating silence. He has the forefinger raised to his mouth; but far more impressive, and far more calculated to invite us to silence and recollection, is the severe, I would almost say threatening, aspect of the Saint."—MARCHESE, by *Meehan*, vol. i, p. 211.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

² ["The three figures are so beautiful, so devout, and so well coloured and designed, that I do not hesitate to class them amongst the most perfect works he executed for S. Mark's."—MARCHESE, by *Meehan*, vol. i, p. 211.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

Emmaus above the door of the refectory; but his work is very inferior to that of Beato Angelico, both as to religious expression and skill.

A beautiful figure¹ of S. Thomas Aquinas, unfortunately very much injured, completes the decoration of the cloister, where our painter has thus presented to the thoughts of his brethren the example of recollection, of science and of all the religious virtues, along with the Passion of our Lord.

The great composition filling all the farther end of the chapter-room is usually cited as the masterpiece of Beato Angelico. This painting is the largest and most important, and represents the scene of Calvary, the eternal object of the contemplation and love of the saints. Christ on a very high Cross rules the whole of the world; he is placed between the repentant and impenitent, the good and the bad, thieves. At his feet, a death's-head marks the consequences of sin, of which he is the victim and vanquisher. Around him, are the faithful friends of his Passion: the Blessed Virgin, sinking under the weight of her grief, is supported by a holy female; Mary Magdalen, kneeling at the foot of the Cross, turns without rising to receive the Mother of the Saviour into her arms. This group is one of the greatest beauty. On one side, S. John Baptist; S. Mark, historian of the Passion and protector of the convent; S. Lawrence; SS. Cosmas and Damian, patrons of the Medici. On the opposite side, are represented other witnesses of the Passion of our Lord. At their head, S. Dominic, in an ecstasy of grief; S. Zanobius, bishop of Florence, who seems to be addressing

¹ ["A half-figure."—MARCHESE, *loc. cit.*—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

S. Jerome prostrate with his hands joined; behind him and above, S. Augustin in the attitude of meditation; S. Francis of Assisi, with his little crosses and stigmata, who, with his head leaning on his hand, casts a seraphic look on his Divine Model; S. Benedict holding the rod of penance; S. Bernard pressing the gospel to his heart and tenderly contemplating his master: a sublime figure of faith, ardour and purity; S. Romuald, bending under the weight of years; S. Gualbert breaking out into sobs; S. Peter Martyr and S. Thomas Aquinas. All these saints superabound in love, and the feelings they experience are rendered with a variety and intensity of expression, of which it is impossible to give an idea.

The whole composition is framed in a broad and rich border divided by medallions, in which the prophets assist at the great event they had announced. They hold banderols, whereon are texts which form, as it were, a canticle in honour of the truth. At the right of Christ, the first personage, whose name is effaced, says: "The God of nature is suffering."¹ Then comes Daniel: "In seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, Christ shall be slain."

Zacharias. "See what I have suffered."

The Patriarch Jacob. "To the prey, my son, thou art gone up: resting thou hast crouched as a lion."

David. "In my thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."

At the top of the composition, is a pelican giving life

¹ [Perhaps S. Dionysius the Areopagite. When he saw the miraculous darkness at the crucifixion of Christ, he exclaimed, "Either the God of nature is suffering, or the fabric of the world is dissolved."—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

to its young ones with its blood. Below is read: "I am become like to a pelican of the wilderness."

Isaias. "Surely He hath carried our sorrows."

Jeremias. "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow."

Ezechiel. "I have exalted the low tree."

Job. "Who will give us of his flesh that we may be filled?"

The Sibyll of Erythræa. "Dying he shall die, and sleeping three days, then shall he be the first returned from hell to see the light."¹

In the lower border, Beato Angelico has represented the glories of the Order of S. Dominic. The holy Founder placed in the middle holds a genealogical tree, and the scrolls on it form medallions, on which are the saints, popes, cardinals, bishops and celebrated religious whom the Dominican family has given to the Church. On one side, Innocent V., Cardinal Hugues de S. Cher; the Patriarch of Gradi, Paolo Pilastrini; S. Antoninus, archbishop of Florence; Blessed Jordan of Saxony, Beato Niccola della Paglia, Beato Buoninfegna, martyr.

On the opposite side, Benedict XI, Beato Giovanni Dominici, Beato Pietro da Palude, Blessed Albert the Great, S. Raymund of Pennafort, Beato Chiaro da

¹ Deus nature patitur.—Post ebdomades viii et lxii occidetur xps.—*Dan.*, ix, 26. Ad predam descendisti (*ascendisti*), fili mi dormiens (requiescens). Accubuisti ut leo.—*Gen.* xlix, 9. In siti mea potaverunt me aceto.—*Ps.* lxxviii, 22.—Similis factus sum pellicano solitudinis.—*Ps.* ci, 7. Vere languores meos (*nostros*) ipse tulit.—*Isaias* liii, 4. O vos omnes qui transite (*sic*) per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus.—*JEREMIAS*; *Lam.* i, 12. Exaltavi lignum humile.—*Ezechiel*, xvii, 24. Quis det de carnibus ejus ut saturemur?—*Job* xxxi, 31. Morte morietur tribus diebus fomno subsepto, et tunc ab infernis regressus ad uicem veniet primus.

Sefto, S. Vincent Ferrer, and Beato Bernardo, one of the martyrs of Avignonet.¹

The figures in this vast composition are all admirable in style, drawing and expression; one only makes a disparity, and it is S. Mark placed on the right of the Cross, between S. John Baptist and S. Lawrence. It is badly placed and ill proportioned; and the head is evidently too large. We believe this figure to be Fra Benedetto's; his brother may have let him paint the patron of the convent, of which he was sub-prior.

This fresco has all the qualities of a great monumental picture. The execution of it is simple and free, and the colouring soft and full of light. The personages are very well preserved, but the back-ground on which they are set off is unfortunately in a deplorable state. It is covered with a heavy tint of dirty red, which has been shaded off into a grey, whilst often carried over the outlines. It is impossible to explain this act of vandalism, of which we do not know the date and author.²

¹ Many of these names were not put by Beato Angelico; this is evident as to the saints beatified after his death. There is still seen beneath the name of S. Antonius, the one it has replaced.

² "In this work," says Vafari, "are figures of all those saints who have been heads and founders of religious bodies, mourning and bewailing at the foot of the Cross on one side, and on the other S. Mark the Evangelist, beside the mother of the Son of God, who has fainted at the sight of the crucified Saviour. Around the Virgin are the Maries, who are sorrowing with and supporting her; they are accompanied by the saints Cosimo and Damiano. It is said that in the figure of San Cosimo, Fra Giovanni depicted his friend Nanni d'Antonio di Banco, the sculptor, from the life. Beneath this work, in a frieze over the back of the seats, the master executed a figure of San Domenico standing at the foot of a tree, on the branches of which are medallions, in which are all the popes, cardinals, bishops, saints and masters in theology who had belonged to Fra Giovanni's Order of Preaching Friars, down to his own day. In this work the brethren of his

The chronicle of San Marco mentions another painting by Beato Angelico in the refectory of the

Order assisted him by procuring portraits of these various personages from different places, by which means he was enabled to execute many likenesses from nature. These are—San Domenico in the centre, who is grasping the branches of the tree; Pope Innocent V; a Frenchman. The Beato Ugone, first cardinal of that order; the Beato Paolo, the patriarch, a Florentine; Bishop (*sic*) Giordano, a German, and the second general of the order; the Beato Niccolo; the Beato Remigio, a Florentine; and the martyr Bonifegno, a Florentine; all these are on the right hand. On the left, are Benedict XI., of Treviso; Giandominico, a Florentine cardinal; Pietro da Palude, patriarch of Jerusalem; the German Alberto Magno, the Beato Raimondo, of Catalonia, third general of the order; the Beato Chiaro; a Florentine, and provincial of Rome; San Vincenzio di Valenza; and the Beato Bernardo, a Florentine; all these heads are truly graceful and very beautiful.” —VASARI, by Foster, vol. ii, p. 25.

The garments of the Holy Virgin have unhappily suffered from *restorers*.

“In the chapter-room, of which we speak, he painted the Redeemer on the Cross, and on either side of Him the two thieves. At the foot of the Cross, and on both sides of it, he introduced a great multitude of Saints. The figure of the Redeemer is one of rare beauty and noble form: the nude is slightly Giottesque; nevertheless, it is, in my judgment, far superior to the carnosic forms of the Cinquecentists, not excepting even those of Fra Bartolommeo della Porta. The nude of the two thieves is inferior; but on the countenance of one of them, you read the assurance of pardon, whilst that of the other bears the stamp of blasphemy and the despairfulness that seems a foretaste of hell. At the Cross’s foot, on the right, he painted the Virgin, who has swooned, and is supported by S. John and one of the pious women. Magdalene throws herself forward to help her, and clasps her in her arms. This is a group so beautiful and so touching, that it does not yield to Razzi’s Swoon of S. Catherine da Siena—a composition that fills every eye with tears. Then follows a beautiful figure of the Baptist, well designed and well coloured, pointing with the index to that Saviour whom he had preached to the multitude in the wilderness. S. Mark kneeling, points to the book of the Gospels, in which he has described the life and death of the Redeemer. The last figures are SS. Laurence, Cosmas, and Damian. On the left a new scene, not less tender and devout, presents itself. Here are eleven saints, for the most part Founders of the Religious Orders, who seem to meditate the Passion of Christ, and it may be that the Angelico introduced them to show that they had partaken copiously of the fruits of the Redemption; and as the chapter-room was meant to be the place for admonishing, correcting, and inspiring the religious with fervour for the observance of conventual discipline, perhaps, he desired to present them these saints as grand models for their imitation. And first we see S. Dominic prostrate at the foot of the Cross, wrapt in profound contemplation; a figure excellently designed and coloured. Then follows S. Zanobi, bishop of Florence,

convent. It represented Christ on the Cross, assisted by the Holy Virgin and by S. John. It was destroyed in 1534.¹

The cells painted by Beato Angelico were constructed under the inspiration of the most severe religious simplicity. They are ranged in two lines under an open wood-work roof, and are narrow, low, and lighted by little arched windows. The space is rigorously meted

who meditates the vaticinations of the prophets, realized in the Redeemer, to whom he points with his finger. That bald old man, with white beard, wasted and emaciated by years and fastings, is the great Jerom, in whose breast the love of the Cross blunted the keenest passions, and who seems to beg aid in his most direful need. Then comes S. Augustin, who meditates and writes. The Patriarch of the Franciscans, the poor one of Christ, is prostrate on the ground, in the most overwhelming dolor : a wonderful figure, in which there is indescribable affection. S. Benedict is in deep meditation ; but I know not whether the Passion of the Lord or the revival of monastic discipline in the West has most of his thoughts. S. Bernard lovingly gazes at the Crucified, and, with both hands, clasps a volume to his bosom—that dear volume into which he has poured the tender effusions of his heart. S. Romuald, bending beneath the weight of years, supports his feeble body on a staff, and seems buried in some profoundly sad thought. A solitary, that I take to be S. John Gualberto, sobs and weeps. The last are two Dominican saints, S. Thomas of Aquino, who contemplates the sublime mystery which saved the human race, and of which he wrote so wisely ; and S. Peter Martyr whose gaping wound tells how he gave to Christ *blood for blood*. . . . The figures in this composition are remarkable for flowing drapery, as also for the expression of the heads, not to speak of the relief and great power of the design. I must observe, however, that I am not satisfied with the extremities, in which there is a negligence not unusual to him ; nevertheless, whenever he wished, he removed such blemishes. . . .

“In order to develope still more effectively this devout meditation, the painter executed, on the ten hexagons that surround the arch of the ceiling, ten half-figures of Prophets and Sybils, holding certain scrolls with words relative to the Passion of our Lord ; and they are as beautiful and graceful as it is possible to imagine. On the frieze that runs under the fresco the entire length of the façade, he executed, in ten small circles, the portraits of S. Dominic and the illustrious men of his institute. . . .”—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, p. 212.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

[¹ Probably it was a repetition of the one at Fiesole, destroyed to make room for the great fresco by Antonio Sogliani, which represents S. Dominic and his brethren served at table by the angels.—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, p. 217.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

out for a table, chair, and a poor bed on which the religious took rest for some instants from his studies and prayer. On these walls destitute of all ornament, our painter has executed his masterpieces. Is there not here truly a proof of touching humility? No idea of human glory could have come into his mind in decorating these obscure cells. The strict enclosure of the convent would withdraw them from the gaze of the crowd; and yet he has put all his skill into them: like other saints, who for the glory of God and the consolation of souls pour out in secret direction all the treasures of their heart and eloquence.

Beato Angelico has wished to recount the Life of our Lord again, and has left a page for each of his brethren to meditate. He has often added to the scene some saint who witnessed it, male or female, to satisfy doubtless the devotion of the religious who had to dwell in the cell. The figures are middle-sized, and the colouring admirably sweet.¹ Fra Benedetto has helped his brother in the work: and we have even remarked that their compositions were almost always alternate. Thus they worked side by side. We will follow the historical order in the examination of these paintings.

On the outer wall of the range of cells is an Annunciation, which, whilst it altogether recalls the one at Cortona by its grace and purity, shows the artist's progress. The Blessed Virgin is seated on a little stool, and bends forward before the angel kneeling in front of her. The sanctuary where this heavenly scene passes

[¹ Vasari declares that this history from the New Testament "is beautiful beyond the power of words to describe."—VASARI, *by Foster*, vol. ii, p. 27.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

is an open portico, on which the little cell of the Virgin opens. The architecture is the same as in the cloisters of San Marco. It is surrounded by an enclosed garden, all covered with beautiful flowers, which the foot of man has never trodden. The filial hand of the painter has written at the bottom of this composition, "Hail, Mother of love, Mary, noble feat of the whole Trinity:" and below, "When thou comest before this figure of the spotless Virgin, take heed in passing it that the Ave be not unfaid."¹

Another Annunciation is painted in a cell, and has perhaps something more heavenly. The Holy Virgin kneels on a stool; the angel is standing before her, and seems to be waiting for her answer. Behind him

¹ Salve, Mater pietatis, et totius Trinitatis nobile triclinium, Maria. Virginis intacte cum veneris ante figuram, pretereundo cave ne fideatur ave.—This inscription reminds us of the one adorning the statue of the Blessed Virgin at the beautiful portal of the Dalbade, at Toulouse:—

"Chretien, si mon amour est en ton cœur gravé,
Ne diffère, en passant, de me dire un Ave.

[“The first that presents itself is an Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, in the upper dormitory, the figures of which are somewhat less than life-size. On a superficies, ten palms in length, he painted the habitation of our Lady, surrounded by a vestibule, which rests on Corinthian columns, much in the style of that which he executed at Cortona; and though the perspective is not perfect, it is better than that of the former. On the outside is the little Garden of Mary, enclosed by a thick hedge and railing; a figure employed by the Church to denote her unblemished virginity. The Holy Maiden of Nazareth is seated on an unadorned chair; the colour of her tunic is a pale red, her azure mantle falls in folds over her knees, her arms are crossed on her bosom, and her countenance, if not remarkable for great beauty, is resplendent with the calm serenity of Paradise. Her fair hair falls gracefully on her shoulders, and so humble and devotional is her whole attitude, that in the presence of this dear image, we almost feel the Angelical Salutation, ‘Hail, full of Grace,’ trembling on our lips. . . . The figure of the Archangel is truly beautiful. A sweet smile plays on his celestial features, and bending one knee, and crossing his arms on his breast, he seems to await anxiously the announcement of Mary’s consent: it is thus that Dante has described him.”—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, p. 218.—TRANSLATOR’S note.]

and outside the portico, is seen S. Peter Martyr, so famous for his purity. This composition is ravishingly beautiful.

The Nativity recalls the one on the panels in the Academy of Fine Arts. S. Peter Martyr and S. Catherine of Alexandria are kneeling, with Mary and Joseph, to adore the Divine Child lying on a little straw, and stretching out his little arms to his Mother.

The Presentation in the Temple has great relation with the composition of Giotto. in the Academy of Fine Arts. The figure of the Blessed Virgin is particularly remarkable for its simpleness. The straight lines of her mantle and garment veil the form and movements of her body. The aged Simeon lovingly presses the Child Jesus to his heart. S. Peter Martyr, and the prophets Anna or Beata Villana are witnesses of the same.¹

The Adoration of the Magi is a masterpiece, which may be advantageously compared with all art then produced most perfect. It is executed in a cell larger than the others; Cosimo de Medici had it made, to go there and converse with S. Antoninus and our two painters, whom he particularly loved. Pope Eugenius IV. also inhabited it, when he went to preside at the consecration of the church of San Marco, in 1442. This ceremony took place on the festival of the Epiphany, and was the grand festival of the period. The Council of Florence had seen the East adore

[¹ "Nothing can be truer than his manner of portraying the affection of the Mother, or the jubilee of the aged Simeon, clasping the Promised One in his arms. Although this picture has sustained injury at the hands of some one who removed the primitive ground, it is still very beautiful, particularly in the heads of Simeon and the Mother."—MARCHESE, *by Meehan*, vol. i, p. 220.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

Christ in the bosom of the Roman Church. The emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople, the ambassadors of Ethiopia and Syria, were come to present their submission and homage to it in the person of the successor of S. Peter; and the splendid festivals which our painter saw celebrated on that occasion, under the vaults of Santa Maria dei Fiori, must necessarily have influenced his imagination. The Adoration of the Magi is a subject often chosen by the painters of the Renaissance, because they could display in it great luxury of costumes and drapery. Beato Angelico painted it in the cell of Cosimo de Medici as an instruction to the rich and powerful, who should lay down their sceptres and their treasures at the feet of Christ.

The scene is admirably disposed: the back-ground represents the mountains of Judea the Magian kings have crossed. The grotto of Bethlehem is indicated by a flat surface of wall. The Holy Virgin's throne is the saddle of an ass, and she holds the Child Jesus on her knees, who blesses the old Magian king, prostrate and scarce daring to put out his head and hand to embrace the feet of the Desired of Nations. He has offered his present, which S. Joseph holds standing near the Holy Virgin. Behind this personage are the other two kings and their suite, composed of warriors and sages in oriental costumes. One of them holds a sphere, to indicate the science which has led them to the feet of the Saviour. Two men on horseback look up into the sky at the star which has stood still over the stable. All these figures are full of life and drawn perfectly; no doubt they present portraits of celebrities of the period, whom it is impossible for us now to recognise.

Instead of imitating the painters, who were then beginning to fill their pictures with the lifeless heads standing before the spectator, Beato Angelico has brought them perfectly upon the stage and imparted to them all the sentiments of faith and adoration. By its beauty and execution, this painting recalls the Descent from the Cross in the Academy of Fine Arts, and it is very much superior to the Adoration of the Magi, by Gentile de Fabriano, in the same Gallery.¹

The Baptism of our Lord takes place in a solitude surrounded with rocks. The Holy Ghost appears under the form of a dove in the sky, and lights up all the scene with his rays. Our Lord is baptized by S. John. Two angels are holding his garments, on the right; and on the left, a female saint and a male saint, Dominicans, are at prayer. The style and the faults in proportion make us attribute this composition to Fra Benedetto.

Two cells have been suppressed, to open a commu-

¹ ["The back ground presents a distant view of the mountains of Judea; and in order that nothing might seduce the eye or the soul from the contemplation of the principal subjects, he divested them of verdure and foliage. Hollowed in the living rock is seen the miserable grotto which first sheltered the Saviour. The poor Virgin is seated, and has her Divine Son on her knees. On her left is her spouse, who contemplates an offering made by one of the Kings. Before them, prostrate on the ground, in most profound adoration, is a hoary-headed king, the first of the Magi, who, having laid down his diadem, approaches his lips to the Divine Infant, who, with childish grace, blesses him. Behind him is the second, who kneels, and evinces anxiety to perform the same act of devotion. The third, the youngest of the three, is standing. Then follows a long train of footmen and servants, admirably arranged and grouped; some of whom discourse animatedly; and in order to show that these princes were skilled in astronomy, he placed in the hand of one of them an armillary sphere, as though he would thus seek to account for that wonderful star which had lighted their way to Bethlehem. This idea is beautifully expressed. The others are engaged with the horses; but nothing can be more graceful than the last figure on the left, which represents a

nication with the library. The subjects represented were, our Lord Jesus in the Desert, and his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. There remains only of the first subject a beautiful figure of the Saviour, sitting with his hands clasped and his eyes raised to heaven. His garments are admirably draped.

The Sermon on the Mount. Christ is speaking to the Apostles sitting in a circle at his feet. He has his right hand raised, and holds a paper rolled up in the other. The singular disposition of the personages, and their badly-drawn postures and heads, make us recognize Fra Benedetto's hand again.

The Transfiguration. This composition is full of greatness and majesty. Christ standing on a rock, with his arms extended in a cross, shows himself in his glory. This type is admirable for calmness and grandeur. The Christ of the Transfiguration by Raphael may be more elegant and bold, but the one

man endeavouring to gaze at the star, beaming over the grotto, whilst he uses his hand to protect his eyes against its blinding rays. Speaking of the artistic merits of this work, we may say that the Blessed Virgin and Infant are supernaturally beautiful. Nothing could have been better designed and coloured than the first of the Magi, nor can anything better express his burning desire to kiss the holy feet of the Redeemer. The two other figures of the kings possess equal merit for the nobility and grace that beam from their countenances; but no words of ours could describe the perfection of that group of courtiers and pages, who, gathered together, converse about the wondrous event. In fact one knows not which should be most praised, the beauty of the attitudes, or the arrangement of the draperies, that are in every respect worthy of the most celebrated painter. No one will refuse to recognise in the whole composition a happy imitation of that life and grace so peculiar to Masolino; and these characteristics are chiefly noticeable in the relief which the Angelico has given to all the figures. The extremities are well designed; nor does the entire lack a single beauty calculated to gladden the heart or the eye. We grieve to think that time has done much injury to this work; nor do I know if it be in man's power to preserve it from approaching ruin."—MARCHESE, by *Mechan*, vol. i, p. 221.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

by Beato Angelico is truer and more divine. The heads of Moses and Elias appear only in the clouds, and leave to the principal figure all its importance. The postures of the Apostles very well express the dazzling of the light and the trouble of the ecstasy.

The Institution of the Eucharist. Our Lord gives Holy Communion to the Apostles sitting or kneeling. Faith and love shine on all their countenances. But the false movements and heads too big give notice of Fra Benedetto's hand.¹

The Prayer in the Garden of Olives. Our Lord kneeling receives the chalice of the Passion from the angel. The three Apostles, whom sleep has overpowered, are in the foreground. Near them, and as a contrast, Martha and Mary are seen in a cell, who usually personify the active and contemplative lives; but here Mary is reading in a book, and Martha has her hands clasped. Has not Beato Angelico wished to tell that it is necessary to watch with the Saviour by meditation and prayer? All these figures are full of nature and nobleness.

The Betrayal by Judas. The group of our Lord and the faithless Apostle is very fine. Christ casts a look of compassion on him whom he still calls his friend.

Christ in the Prætorium. The Saviour is seated in all the majesty of his voluntary ignominies. He is crowned with thorns, and has a transparent bandage over his eyes. The reed he holds answers him for governing

[¹ "The institution of the Sacrament, in which, following the method of the Giottesque, he painted the Apostles seated at the mystic Supper, and Jesus with the chalice in his left hand whilst he presents to them the consecrated host with his right."—MARCHESE, by Meehan, vol. i, p. 222.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

the world. The executioners are absent; but on the hangings of the throne is seen, as set-off's the head of the servant who spits in his face, and the hands that strike and outrage him. On the steps of the throne, the Holy Virgin and S. Dominic meditate the Passion. This composition is simple and sublime.¹

Christ goes up to Mount Calvary. This is not an historical scene, but a pious instruction. The Saviour carries his Cross meekly, and his looks invite men to follow him. A holy woman, who represents the Christian soul or the Church, walks in his footsteps in the dolorous way. A Dominican religious kneels on this passage.

Christ fastened to the Cross. This composition, particularly beautiful, is remarkable for the novel manner in which the subject is rendered. The Cross is set up like an altar for sacrifice; a little ladder serves as steps for the victim. Our Lord has voluntarily gone up, and stretches out his arms to the executioners, who are piercing his hands. He bows his head and raises his

[¹ "As the profound devotion of the Angelico would not allow him to represent the sacred humanity of the Redeemer exposed to fiendish outrage and derision, he studied to make His divinity appear under the lowly garb of His mortality. He therefore painted Jesus seated in great majesty on a throne, but, though blind-folded, the transparency of the veil allows us to see His eyes, which are stern and threatening. His right hand holds the globe, and the left, instead of a sceptre, a bunch of rods. Of the scoffers we can only see the hands and faces. The white garment that covers Him is beautifully draped. Seated at the foot of the throne are the Dolourated Virgin and S. Dominic, on the right and left; the latter, whose attitude is graceful, holds an open volume on his knees and profoundly meditates the humiliations of the Divine Word. Motivated by the same tender devotion, instead of exhibiting the Redeemer writhing under the scourger's lash, he represents Him bound to the pillar; and places before Him S. Dominic, who inflicts the discipline on his own naked shoulders.—MARCHESE, by Meehan, vol. i, p. 223.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

eyes to heaven, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"¹ On his right, two holy women join in his grief; on his left, three persons seem to be prefiding at his execution: a doctor discussing, another looking insolently at the holy women, and a foldier clapping his hand on the hilt of his sword; that is, the injustice, hatred and violence called up against the Saviour. We do not know a more religious picture. The figure of Christ especially is very beautiful; but still it causes more compassion than admiration.²

Padre Marchese brings to this composition the fragment of a legend of the thirteenth century, which seems to have inspired it. "And when they turned again, they perceived the Lord Jesus, who was going up the ladder with His feet and hand, and on seeing this spectacle their lamentations were so great and so rending, that heaven and earth seemed to groan too. The other persons wept with compassion over the Son, the Mother, and S. Magdalen who spoke so piteously that all who heard her seemed to have their hearts broken. It must be believed that the Lord Jesus voluntarily mounted the ladder of the Cross with His feet and hand. The centurion, who was afterwards saved, remarked Him, and as he was wise, said within himself, 'O! what a wonder,

Pater, dimiſſe illis, quia nesciunt *quid faciunt*.

² ["He painted the Crucifixion in many of the cells; and in that inhabited by the writer of these memoirs, he represented Christ ascending the gibbet, to show the spontaneity of His death, and Mary fainting and falling into the arms of Magdalene, at the foot of the Holy Rood. In the contiguous cell he painted the Dolourated Virgin and S. John weeping bitterly; then follow portraits of S. Dominic and Thomas of Aquino, absorbed in the contemplation of this ineffable mystery of love."—MARCHESE, by Meehan, vol. i. p. 223.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

the Prophet appears to go up voluntarily to be placed on the Cross; He does not make any complaint nor resistance.' And whilst he was wondering at Him, the Lord Jesus went up as high as was necessary, then He turned on the ladder, extended His arms in a princely manner, and offered His hands to those who were charged to pierce them."¹ How many inspirations would art again find in these pious and poetic legends!

The Crucifixion. Christ, amidst the agonies of death, promises the joys of paradise to the good thief.² At the foot of the Cross, the Holy Virgin and S. John, who are weeping. S. Dominic extends his arms, to imitate the Saviour. Another Dominican kneeling holds an open book. This composition is beautiful; but the faults in drawing and proportions make us attribute it to Fra Benedetto.

The Death of Our Lord is again represented in two cells. Beato Angelico has chosen the moment when the foldier Longinus pierces the Saviour's side, and makes gush out under the head of his spear the divine blood which is to heal the eyes of his body, and to purify those of his soul. A Dominican saint kneels at the foot of the Cross. The Virgin Mary turns away and hides her face in her hands: Martha advances to support her. This scene is full of devotion and recollection. The figure of Longinus is very fine. The draperies are drawn very remarkably. In another cell, Christ has for witnesses of his death the Holy Virgin and S. John on one side, S. Dominic and S. Jerome on the other. The style of all these figures is very beautiful.

¹ S. Marco illustrato e inciso.—V. MARCHESE, p. 40.

² Hodie mecum eris in paradiso.

S. Jerome presents the same type as in the frame of the Descent from the Cross, in the Academy of Fine Arts, and in the great fresco in the chapter-room. His emaciation, his short and poor garment, his book and discipline recall his life of study and of penance in the desert.

The Burial. The holy women and S. John the Evangelist bury our Lord, in the presence of S. Dominic. We believe this composition to be by Fra Benedetto, who may have been inspired, especially for the head of Christ, by the Burial we have admired in the Academy of Fine Arts.

We will also attribute to the same artist the *Descent into Limbo*, in the cell where S. Antoninus dwelt. The composition is the same as the one he made in the Life of our Lord, in the Academy of Fine Arts. Christ enters as conqueror, and stretches out his hand to Abraham, the father of the faithful, who leads the just, at the head of whom walk Adam and Eve. Satan is crushed by the fall of the gate of hell, and the devils flee into the clefts of the rock. The figure of the Saviour has some movement and nobleness; but in the other personages there are gross faults, which Beato Angelico could not have committed; the feet particularly are horribly drawn.

The Holy Women at the Tomb. The angel is sitting on the edge of the empty tomb, and announces the resurrection by his gesture. Christ appears in the upper part, with the palm and the standard of victory. The holy women do not see him, and look into the tomb with sadness. This group is admirable and would do honour to the greatest masters. Behind the angel

is a kneeling figure of S. Dominic; it is said to be a portrait. Beato Angelico has, perhaps, painted a religious, which may have been afterwards decorated with an aureola and a star. All this composition is executed with wonderful sweetness of tone and softness of light.

Noli me tangere. In a lonely and choice garden Jesus appears to Mary Magdalen, as the gardener who cultivates the flowers of virtue in the soul; but he passes on, charging her, who is adoring him, not to be too much attached to the sweetness of his presence. Mary Magdalen on her knees stretches out her hands towards him; she is ardent but submissive. It is impossible to give this lesson in mystic life better.

The Coronation of the Virgin. Beato Angelico has treated his much-loved subject with his ordinary perfection. Christ and the Holy Virgin, in glory, are seated on light clouds. The Son puts the heavenly crown upon the head of his Mother, who humbly bows and seems again to say, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." It is the translation of the verse of Petrarch,

"E stava tutta humile in tanta gloria."

Both are clothed with the same white shining garment, as with the same flesh and same purity. Some saints in ecstasy assist at this triumph of the Blessed Virgin; S. Paul, S. Benedict, S. Dominic, S. Francis, S. Peter Martyr. Our painter may be said to have shared in their ecstasy, to render it so well.¹

[¹ "The last of the frescos, and the most beautiful of them all, in which he displays such mastery in depicting the ineffable joys of heaven, is the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin. This, indeed, is far more celestial than his picture on the same subject in the gallery of the Uffizj. We, however, will endeavour to de-

Beato Angelico has painted for another religious one of his most beautiful Madonnas. The Child Jesus standing on his Mother's knees, seems to be teaching the two greatest theologians of the Church, S. Augustine and S. Thomas Aquinas.

Lastly, on the wall of the upper dormitory, Beato Angelico has offered to the piety of his brethren another Madonna surrounded with the patron saints of the convent and Order, S. Mark, S. Cosmas, S. Damian, and S. Dominic, on the right; and on the left, S. Paul, S. Lawrence, S. Thomas, and S. Peter Martyr. S. Dominic holds a book and points in it to the bequest he left his children: "Have charity, keep humility, possess voluntary poverty. I call down the

scribe how the artist developed his devout conception; for, indeed, we confess our inability to express the sensations which this glorious work has awakened in our heart. He painted the Virgin seated on a white cloud, which is over-arched by a charming rainbow. She is robed in white, her arms are folded on her bosom, a gentle smile is on her lips, and she leans gracefully forward towards her Divine Son. 'Mid all the glory, she is the humblest of all. The Word is seated by her side, and seems to crown her. He does not, however, hold the golden diadem in His hands; on the contrary, He barely touches it with the extremity of His fingers, as though He had ordered it to go and encircle His Mother's temples—a sublime idea, that reminds us of the creative *Fiat*. He also wears a white robe, which is shaded with a light tint of chiaroscuro, and appears to be as subtle as the air. In the drapery of these figures the Angelico has excelled himself. At their feet he painted three Saints on the right and three on the left; they also stand on a white cloud, and are wrapt in ecstasy, contemplating this glory. Here he has more closely followed Dante; for he disposed these six figures on a semicircular line, as though they constituted one of those garlands of Blessed spirits who incessantly sing and dance round the throne of the Eternal. They are SS. Paul, Thomas, Francis, Benedict, Dominic, Peter Martyr; and they all have their eyes and hands raised to heaven. From their countenances beam joy and beatitude. Whosoever stands in presence of it may almost fancy himself translated to the society of the Blessed. The tinting of this history is so delicate and transparent, and the pencilling so fine, that it looks more like a celestial vision than a painting; and, perhaps, it appeared as such to the devout artist in the act of colouring it."—MARCHESE, *by Mehan*, vol. i., p. 225.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

curse of God and mine on him who shall bring possessions into my Order.”¹ This composition is one of the most perfect in the convent of San Marco. The execution is free, the figures well drawn and in an excellent style. All the personages are full of nobleness and life: they well represent to us the religious who came to plant the standard of the reform in the city of Florence, which corruption was invading on every side. They were distinguished as much for their sanctity as for their science and genius. The great movement produced in the Church by S. Catherine of Sienna, made itself particularly felt within her Order. It was the epoch of S. Vincent Ferrer and S. Antoninus; and beside Beato Angelico shone Padre Giovanni of Montenegro, the light of the Council of Florence, who was admired by the most distinguished minds of the East, sent to conclude the reconciliation which unfortunately was of so short duration.

O, sweet asylum! fair convent! little cells! lonely cloisters! May you see your ancient days again! How can I forget the time I passed beneath your shadow! It was easy for me, whilst studying your masterpieces, to call up the recollection of the holy generation which lived with Beato Angelico. I saw its beautiful images in those pictures, and once more found its virtues in those who gave me so benevolent a hospitality.

¹ Caritatem habete, humilitatem servate, paupertatem voluntariam possidete. Maledictionem Dei et meam imprecor possessiones inducenti in meo Ordine.



CHAPTER XII.

*BEATO ANGELICO AT ROME.—CHAPEL OF THE
VATICAN.—(1445-1455.)*



BEATO ANGELICO had to pass his last years at Rome. That city, the centre of the world and of history, seemed sprung to life again after the return of the popes. Its monuments were admired, its ruins interrogated, its masterpieces dug up.

All artists made a pilgrimage to it; and we have seen how architects, sculptors and painters brought new ideas back, and the germ of the Renaissance. Beato Angelico was as capable as his fellow-citizens of admiring these wonders; but it was not pagan Rome he wished to see, it was Rome the holy, the catacombs, the tomb of the Apostles, that battle-field of Christianity and heathenism, those temples conquered by the martyrs, and the Cross of Christ upon the Capitol. And if he

admired the statues of the vanquished gods and the wealth of their spoil, his heart was thereby made only more faithful to the Truth, which had triumphed over them.

Beato Angelico had to quit Florence for Rome about the year 1445. Pope Eugenius IV., who had particularly known him at the convent of San Marco, called him to decorate the Vatican. This was, without doubt, at the time of the decease of Archbishop Zabarella, in 1445, and at that period must be fixed the fact inextricably related by Vasari.

This historian tells us that Beato Angelico was called to Rome by Nicholas V., who wished to nominate him to the archbishopric of Florence. "And as Fra Giovanni appeared to the pope to be, as he really was, a person of most holy life, gentle and modest, he judged him, on the archbishopric of Florence becoming vacant, worthy of that dignity. But the Friar, when he heard it, besought his Holiness to provide some other person, as he did not feel himself capable of governing the people; and said that there was in his religion a Friar, a lover of the poor, very learned, able to govern, and one who feared God, on whom it would be much better to confer the dignity than on himself. The pope hearing this, and remembering that what he said was true, freely granted him the favour, and thus was Fra Antonino, of the Order of Preachers, made archbishop of Florence, a man truly renowned for holiness and learning, such an one in short as to merit being canonized by Adrian VI. in our own time."¹

¹ E perchè al papa parve fra Giovanni, siccome era veramente, persona di santissima vita, quieta e modesta, vacando l'arcivescovado in quel tempo di Firenze

Vafari is evidently mistaken in attributing the nomination of S. Antoninus to Nicholas V., since it took place under the pontificate of Eugenius IV., in 1445. With regard to the offer made to Beato Angelico, many, despite so positive testimony of tradition, find it scarcely probable that the Sovereign Pontiff who had called him to the Vatican would desire to take him away from the pencil and cast him amidst the difficulties of the administration of a diocese. He might be worthy of the episcopate for his virtues, but nothing had qualified him to discharge its functions. Would it not be more natural to suppose that the Sovereign Pontiff only consulted Beato Angelico amidst the intrigues of which the see of Florence was the object, and that our painter fixed his choice on S. Antoninus? A letter of one of the holy archbishop's friends, addressed to the Dominicans of Bologna, tells us that the pope hesitated for nine months, and that the counsels of some religious decided him to nominate S. Antoninus, whom he already knew.¹ Eugenius IV. had appreciated S. Antoninus during his stay at the convent of San Marco, and made him assist in the council of Florence. He

l'aveva guidicato degno di quel grado, quando intendendo ciò il detto frate, supplicò à Sua Santità che provvedesse d'un altro, perciocchè non si sentiva atto a governar popoli; ma che avendo la sua religione un frate amorevole de' poveri, dottissimo, di governo, e timorato di Dio, farebbe in lui molto meglio quella dignità collocata che in se. Il papa sentendo ciò e ricordandosi che quello che diceva era vero, gli fece la grazia liberamente, e così fu fatto archivescovo di Fiorenza frate Antonino dell' ordine de' Predicatori, uomo veramente per santità e dottrina chiarissimo, ed insomma tale, che meritò che Adriano VI. lo canonizzasse a' tempi nostri.

¹ Ita novem mensibus ambiguus, suspensusque animo Romanus Pontifex perseverat. cui tandem subjicientibus viris religiosis personam Antonini, cum jam antea virtutem hominis cognovisset, statim eorum consiliis acquievit.—BOLLAND, *Acta Sanctorum*.

maintained the choice against the resistance of his humility, and wrote to him from Rome, ordering him to return to the convent of Fiesole, where he would be sought in great pomp to take possession of his see.

Beato Angelico enjoyed the friendship of two great popes. Eugenius IV. and Nicholas V. were the best gifts God made to His Church in the fifteenth century. The mission of Eugenius IV. was to reform discipline and heal the wounds inflicted by the schism on religion, and he had all the virtues and talents necessary to carry it out. Noble and rich by birth, he might have aspired to every honour; but he strove to fly them by distributing his fortune amongst the poor, and shutting himself up in a convent at Venice. Thither his uncle Gregory XII. went, to take and place him as the light upon the candlestick. Endowed with a superior intelligence and a generous heart, he was the devoted friend of the poor, and an apostle full of zeal for the reform of the Church, the spread of the faith, and the beauties of worship. When he mounted the Chair of Peter, the synod of Basle threatened the West with a new schism. We cannot admire too much the mildness, patience and firmness he displayed to lay the danger. But the great glory of his pontificate was the Council of Florence: the good shepherd neglected no means to bring back the separated sheep to the fold. He spared neither pains, nor steps, nor expence; and at his cost the emperor of Constantinople, the patriarchs of the East, and the Greeks were conducted over and received in Italy. This event was a brilliant victory for the nations of the West. The Greeks themselves owned the superiority of the Latins in the arts as

well as in the sciences. The truth united the conquerors and the conquered again in one same triumph, and the ceremony which closed the council, under the dome of Santa Maria dei Fiori, was a sight worthy of the admiration of heaven and earth. The result would have been greater than that of the Crusades, if the bad faith of the Greeks had not rendered it so transitory. The whole world was at peace; France and Germany were reconciled with the holy see, ambassadors hastened from the most distant countries, and the faith shone in all the splendour of its unity. It was perhaps this solemn moment which rapt S. Catherine of Sienna in ecstacy, when God willed to console her for the horrors of the schism she saw arise under Urban VI.¹ Eugenius IV. also felt great joy, and might have sung the canticle of the aged Simeon, when, just before his death, he received the last ambassadors of the peace. Nothing is more affecting than the account of his end. After he had celebrated holy mass on Christmas-day, he fell ill all at once and announced his approaching death. He called S. Antoninus to assist him, who then saw Beato Angelico again. Before receiving the sacraments, Eugenius IV. delivered an admirable discourse, in the presence of the assembled cardinals. In it he gives, with humility, an account of his glorious pontificate; he rejoices to see all people united, and leaves them the heritage of the peace and example of Jesus Christ; he gives the cardinals counsels for the future, and asks of them only prayers and a simple burial. The next day, the feast of S. Peter's Chair, S. Antoninus spoke long to him on the joys of heaven which he was going to enter, and he took

¹ *Vie de S. Catherine de Sienna*, ii. parte, chap. 10.

possession of it at the very moment when the Church was saying to him "Depart, Christian soul."¹

The conclave which named his successor met in the Dominican church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, and Beato Angelico was consequently one of the first to pay homage to the Cardinal Archbishop of Bologna, who took the name of Nicholas V. Tommaso de Sarzane had particularly known our painter during the Council of Florence, when he was charged by Cosimo de Medici to form the library of the Convent of San Marco; so Beato Angelico found in the new Sovereign Pontiff an affectionate and worthy protector.

Nicholas V. is, perhaps, the most glorious name to oppose to those who push ignorance and falsehood so far as even boldly to accuse the Popes of having been an obstacle to the progress of science and art. No one was more capable of inaugurating the new era which opened for the Church after the Council of Florence, and of guiding the intellectual movement at the moment of the Renaissance in the direct and true path. Nicholas V. would have given his name to his age, if this movement, legitimate in its principle, had not allowed itself to be led astray by idolatry of heathen antiquity. Leo X. gave his own only to an epoch of corruption and decay. Nicholas V. has certainly done more for the sciences and arts than all the Medici, and none afforded them a more intelligent and effectual protection.

Born in an humble station, and obliged to struggle against poverty to instruct himself, still at the age

¹ *Histoire Universelle de l'Eglise Catholique*, par Rohrbacher, tom. xxi., l. lxxxii., p. 587.

of twenty-two years, he won the first honours of the learned university of Bologna. He merited, too, the friendship of Beato Niccolo Albergati, and in remembrance of his benefactor, he chose the name for his pontificate. Being employed in difficult negotiations by Pope Eugenius IV., he turned his long journeys to profit, by studying languages and manuscripts, and his reputation led to his being entrusted with the organization of all the public libraries, on which the learned men of the Renaissance were busied. Being unanimously nominated pope by the college of cardinals, he accepted the heritage of Eugenius IV., and effaced the last traces of the schism by pardoning Felix V. When the Greeks had preferred the turban to the tiara, and drawn down upon themselves the chastisements which are still lasting, he acted against Islamism with the zeal of S. Bernard. The civilization with which he combatted the enemies without, he protected and developed within. The great jubilee of 1450 brought around him the representatives of all nations of the earth, a religious concourse far more imposing and far more civilizing than those organized in our days.

Nicholas V. fought, above all, to favour the progress of science. To collect its sacred and profane treasures he sent all over the earth, and procured manuscripts for their weight in gold; he dreamt of the library of Alexandria for Rome. Men of learning were lodged in the Vatican and magnificently entertained. He caused the poets, the Greek historians, and the fathers of the Church to be copied and translated, and placed at the head of this movement the celebrated and pious Manetto, so well qualified to direct it. The fine arts

also owed much to him. He desired to restore Rome, as Augustus had done. He made the streets larger, raised magnificent buildings, and laid the foundations of the Basilica of San Pietro. Truth was his passion, and he wished it in all and for all; he desired it especially for himself, and regretted the honours of his pontificate as obstacles calculated to deprive him of it. He called about him holy religious, with whom he lived in the strictest intimacy. Beato Angelico was one of his privileged friends. Vasari gives us a proof of this intimacy. "Fra Giovanni," says he, "was a man of simplicity, and most holy in his habits; and he gave this evidence of his goodness, that when Pope Nicholas V. wished one morning to give him dinner, he scrupled to eat flesh without his prior's licence, not reflecting on the higher authority of the pontiff."¹ This affection lasted until death. Nicholas V. would make the epitaph himself, which was engraved on his tomb. Under the charm of these glorious friendships, Beato Angelico passed the last ten years of his life near the pontifical throne. We have now to study the influence Rome exercised on his talent. This influence was what it ought to have been. The artists of Florence were enamoured of ancient art, even to idolatry. Beato Angelico was quite as capable as any of them of appreciating its masterpieces; but his admiration did not keep him from remaining Christian. He did not employ the precious vessels of Egypt to raise up the golden calf,

¹ Fu fra Giovanni semplice uomo e santissimo ne' suoi costumi, e questo faccia segno della bontà sua, che volendo una mattina, papa Niccola V. dargli definire, si fece coscienza di mangiar della carne senza licenza del suo Priore, non pensando all'autorità del Pontefice.

but melted them down to set off the ark of the covenant with the purest ornaments, and to embroider the magnificent draperies of the sanctuary. His inspiration always remained the same. His genius was not led astray into imitation of the ancients. His materials only were richer, his style assumed more grandeur, yet without losing any of the qualities we have already admired in him.

Beato Angelico painted two chapels in the Vatican, the chapel of the Holy Sacrament which was destroyed under Paul III. to form the staircase leading to the Sistine chapel, and the chapel in which the histories of S. Stephen and S. Lawrence are represented, called the chapel of Nicholas V. This is how Vasari speaks of the first. "For the same pope, he did the chapel of the Sacrament in the palace, which was afterwards destroyed by Paul III., to erect a staircase there. In this work, which was an excellent one, he executed in fresco, in his own manner, some histories from the life of Christ, and introduced portraits of many persons eminent in his time. These portraits would probably have been all lost if Paolo Giovio had not had the following taken off for his museum: Nicholas V.; the Emperor Frederic, who, at that time, came into Italy; Fra Antonino, who was then archbishop of Florence; Biondo da Forli, and Ferdinand of Arragon."¹ We do not know what has become of these portraits. The destruction

¹ Fece anco per il detto papa la cappella del Sagramento in Palazzo, che fu poi rovinata da Paolo III. per dirizzarvi le scale, nella quale opera, che era eccellente in quella maniera sua aveva lavorato in fresco alcune storie della vita di Gesù Cristo, e fattovi molti ritratti dinaturale di persone segnalate di que' tempi, i quali per avventura sarebbono oggi perduti, si il Giovio non avesse fattone ricavar questi per il suo museo: papa Nicola V., Federigo imperatore, che in quel tempo venne in

of this chapel is much to be regretted: we should have been able to compare the same subjects executed by the same artist at the three principal epochs of his life, at Fiesole, at San Marco and at Rome.

Fortunately, the other chapel has been preserved. It is small,¹ and lighted by an arched window, below which is now placed the altar once opposite to it. On the other three sides, Beato Angelico has painted two sets of compositions over each other. In the arches of the upper part, he represented the history of S. Stephen in six compartments.

1. *S. Peter confers Deaconship on S. Stephen* in the presence of the college of the apostles. The head of the Church presents the chalice and paten to the deacon, who touches them with reverence, whilst looking at him through whom all power comes down. The altar has an elegant ciborium upon it, and the bottom is ornamented with a rich architectural design. For this subject, as well as for the others, we remark a change of style; the lines become more simple and the draperies more noble. The artist has studied the Roman toga on the ancient statues and bas-reliefs, and in order to display its magnificence, he covers the sacerdotal vestment of S. Peter and the dalmatic of S. Stephen with it.

2. *Distribution of the Alms.* S. Stephen gives the alms of the faithful to the poor. All is done orderly

Italia, frate Antonino, che fu poi arcivescovo di Firenze, il Biondo da Forlì, e Ferrante d'Aragona.

¹ It is 6 metres 75 centimetres long, by 4 metres 20 centimetres broad. The pavement is white marble beautifully inlaid. The sun is represented surrounded with the twelve months of the year, indicated by their Latin initials and the signs of the zodiac. On the scrolls accompanying the extremities of the lozenges of the border is read—NICOLAVS PP. QUINTUS. We believe this pavement was executed under Benedict XIII., in 1725.

and quietly ; a cleric calls out from a list those who are to receive, some are coming up, others going away. S. Stephen is giving a silver piece to a widow : his countenance breathes purity, he looks only at the hand extended to him. The three women in the foreground are in a fine style, and have the dignity of the matron and the modesty of the Christian female. In this composition is seen the ennobling of alms by charity, which unites before God him who gives and him who receives. A man coming up has an admirable truthfulness of drawing : the movement could not be given with more measure and more happily.

3. *The preaching of S. Stephen.* After material alms follow spiritual alms. The saint distributes the bread of the word to an auditory seated at his feet. The women listening to him are remarkable for posture and draperies : their varied heads all express attention and respect. Behind them, some men hear the preaching with various feelings. This composition might be compared with the legend of S. Nicholas, in which the youthful saint is listening to a sermon ;¹ the gracefulness and simplicity are replaced by superior qualities. There is no longer the small lonely auditory on a flowery turf, but the populacy of a great city, in the midst of splendid buildings, and on the irregular pavement of the Roman roads. The genius of the artist has reached its full maturity.

4. *S. Stephen before the great Council.* The saint delivers the sublime discourse, in which he unfolds all the history of the truth.² His posture is quiet ; his intelligent gesture contrasts with the exasperation of

¹ Page 57.

² *Acts of the Apostles*, ch. vii.

the priests, who can oppose him only with falsehood and hatred. This scene is a model of monumental painting; in the architecture is remarked a decoration of the designs in mosaic which ornament a great number of the churches in Rome.

5. *S. Stephen led to Martyrdom.* This scene of violence is rendered perfectly. A Jew drags the faint outside the city, whilst others push him, and stone in hand pursue him. We do not know how to praise too much the energy of expressions, the justness of the movements and the richness of the draperies. The walls forming the back-ground of the picture remind us of the admirable lines of the circuit-wall of Rome between the Porta di San Giovanni Laterano and the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.

6. *The Death of S. Stephen.* The faint receives the crown of martyrdom kneeling, with his hands and eyes raised to heaven. His face is all bathed in blood. Behind the executioners, Saul, their accomplice, carries a cloak; yet the faint is not stripped of his clothes, for the toga still covers the dalmatic. All these compositions indicate the study of the ancient monuments; but the beauty of the lines and nobleness of the draperies do not make any of the religious character and Christian thought be lost.

The history of S. Lawrence approaches the mediæval style in the costumes; but still here may be seen the trace of the archæological studies then in vogue. It must also be remarked that the painter knew how to vary his compositions in subjects pretty nearly alike.

1. *S. Lawrence receives the Deaconship.* The suc-

cessor of S. Peter is seated upon his throne, and makes S. Lawrence touch the chalice and paten. Three persons vested in magnificent copes assist at the ceremony, as also deacons and clerics who hold the book and the censer. All these figures are full of life and purity; and, without doubt, are portraits. Beato Angelico well knew how to choose his models. The background of the picture is a Christian basilica, in the apse of which our Lord is seen represented, giving S. Peter the power to feed his sheep and his lambs.

2. *The Farewell of S. Sixtus and S. Lawrence.* The pope delivers the treasures of the Church to his deacon. A cleric placed behind him turns at the noise made at the door by the soldiers, who are coming to lead him to martyrdom.

3. *S. Lawrence distributes his alms.* The saint who is clothed by Christ, bears these words embroidered on the pectoral of his dalmatic, IHESVS ✠ CRISTVS. He is surrounded by the poor, the lame and the blind, whom he called the treasures of the Church. Beato Angelico could poetise suffering and deformity by the truth of the movements and liveliness of the expressions. The blind man advancing on the right, whilst groping along with his stick, is a masterpiece. Raphael seems to have been inspired by it in his admirable cartoon of the magician struck blind by S. Paul, in the presence of the pro-consul Sergius.¹ It is impossible to give life and movement better.

4. *The Condemnation of S. Lawrence.* The emperor is seated on his tribunal, and shows the saint the instruments of torture in store for him, if he does not

¹ *Acts of the Apostles*, xiii. 2.

sacrifice to the gods. This composition presents a singular medley of costume. It may be said to be a memorial of the coronation of Frederic III., which Beato Angelico witnessed, March 15th, 1451.

The medley of ancient armour of dubious archæological exactness, with the costumes of the middle ages, is very much in conformity with the idea of reviving the empire of the West. The emperor Decius has the cuirass and the draped mantle of the imperial busts of the Renaissance. His sceptre is tipped with a little ancient divinity. The personages around him have the large hanging sleeves and the close cut of the fifteenth century. In all ages, fashion often outrages good taste. The architecture is decorated with ancient ornaments. On the entablature of the tribunal, is seen the Roman eagle, with wings displayed, in a crown of laurel. Above the head of the emperor, is read, DECIUS IMPERATOR, and on the step, A.D. CCLIII., about the date of S. Lawrence's martyrdom, or MCCCCLIII., which would be the year of the execution of the picture.

5. The study of the antique appears still more in the composition following, which represents *The Martyrdom of S. Lawrence*. The emperor, surrounded by his court, assists from the top of a terrace at the punishment of the saint. Between the pillars supporting the terrace, are placed five ancient statues well drawn. Thus may artists, whilst treating subjects of the earliest ages of Christianity, represent the monuments of a religion triumphed over by the Cross; truth even demands it, as it also requires Christian expression and moral beauty to prevail over all these magnificences. It is necessary to look on and express these

scenes with the faith of the first Christians, and not with the incredulity of the heathen, who saw in their victims only dangerous fanatics.

On the left of the spectator, a window of the prison lets S. Lawrence be seen converting a man on his knees, doubtless S. Hippolytus. In the foreground, S. Lawrence extended on his gridiron raises his hand, and seems to be speaking to the emperor, to tell him he was sufficiently burnt on one side, and he might have him turned on the other. The figure is well drawn, and decent despite its nudity. The executioners are varied in posture and expression; one of them is carrying wood; the other turns the saint with a long fork; another makes up the fire, and shows the intensity of the heat by his gestures.

The execution of these pictures is very remarkable. Beato Angelico has not lost any of his qualities and has acquired new ones. To the purity of his drawing and the transparency of his colouring, he has joined more science in the lines, more vigour in the tones, and more power in the modelling.

These compositions are framed with the figures of the greatest doctors of the Church. In the choice of them may be seen a memorial of the Council of Florence. The popes S. Leo and S. Gregory the Great are the sovereign pontiffs who represent best for the East, the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. S. John Chrysostom and S. Athanasius are the two fathers whose works served most to convince the Greeks on the subject of the procession of the Holy Ghost. S. Leo is showing a text open. S. Gregory holds a book and a pen, and is listening to the inspiration of the Holy

Ghost under the form of a dove. St. John Chrysoſtom holds a book, in which this inſcription is read: ATTENDE TIBI IPSI, NE FORTE FIAT IN CORDE TUO OCCULTA, IMPIAVE COGITATIO; "Watch over thyſelf, leſt perhaps a hidden or unholy thought be in thy heart."

From his croſier hangs the *fudarium*, which expreſſes well the ſweat of his laborious epiſcopate. On the embroidery of his cope are decyphered words which ſerve as ornaments, and are, as it were, confuſed traces of the artiſt's thoughts and prayers. *Jeſus of Nazareth, King of the Jews ... Jeſus. Mary ... of ſinners ... our advocate*: CHRISTUS NAZARENUS REX JUDEORUM. A. MAL. JHESUS-MARIA ... DE PECATORIBUS. ET SE. NOSTRA AVOCATA ... S. Athanaſius is in oriental coſtume: he ſeems to be commenting on a paſſage of the Holy Scriptures.

Above theſe figures are placed thoſe of S. Auguſtine, S. Ambroſe, S. Bonaventure, and S. Thomas Aquinas holding a book in which is read: VERITATEM MEDITABITUR GUTTUR MEUM, ET LABIA MEA DETESTABUNTUR INPIUM (*ſic*): "My mouth ſhall meditate truth, and my lips ſhall hate wickedneſs." His breaſt is decorated with an eye beaming like the ſun, to expreſs the light of his intellect which enlightened the Church. All theſe beautiful figures are placed under ſmall gothic canopies, to be compared for elegance with thoſe which crown the ſtatues of the ſaints at the porches of our cathedrals. It is ſeen that Beato Angelico, amidſt his ſtudies of ancient Rome, did not repudiate the architecture of the middle ages. The four evangeliſts are painted in the compartments of

the vaulted ceiling, on an azure ground studded with gold stars. The ridges of the roof are ornamented with designs. In the lower part of the walls a rich drapery is painted. The whole decoration of this chapel is conceived perfectly, and proves how well the artist understood monumental painting for the composition as well as for the execution. The figures are of a suitable size; the general lines and the tones do not disturb the architecture; and the whole is harmonious and full of poetry.¹

¹ ["In the second chapel (now called "of Pope Nicholas V."), he painted some histories of the protomartyr S. Stephen, and S. Laurence, in the manner which we will now describe. He coloured the whole ceiling in ultramarine blue, and studded it with many golden stars, according to the Giottesque, and he introduced the four Evangelists, and eight Doctors of the holy Church. On the right, are S. John Chrysostom and S. Bonaventure. Above these are S. Gregory and S. Augustin. On the left, in the under part, are S. Athanasius, and S. Thomas of Aquino, and over them S. Ambrose and S. Leo, the last of which figures is almost wholly effaced. All these Doctors are represented as standing erect under a little Gothic temple. The histories of the Martyrs he executed in six compartments, wherein he painted the principal facts of the lives of two of them, in order to show the great resemblance that the history of the one bears to that of the other. They are as follows:—S. Peter at an altar giving the chalice to the first consecrated Deacon, S. Stephen, who receives it kneeling.—The holy Martyr giving alms to the poor. In the under part, he introduced Pope S. Sixtus. In the upper part is the Sermon of S. Stephen, and the same Saint before the Jewish high priest. . . In the under part he introduced Pope S. Sixtus blessing S. Laurence, and giving him the treasures of his church to dispense them to the poor, at the very moment that two armed men are striking the door in order to gain admittance. Then comes the holy Deacon, giving alms to a great multitude of poor and infirm. On the left wall he painted the Stoning of S. Stephen, and in the under part S. Laurence before the tyrant, who, pointing to the various instruments of torture, strives to shake his constancy. In another compartment, he executed a little window, through which we can see the Saint in his dungeon, baptizing his fellow-captives. Finally, comes the martyrdom of S. Laurence. Under these little histories he painted a rich ornamentation of fruits and flowers, variously intertwined and alternated with the heads of angels and the triple crown: roses and stars exquisitely arranged complete the adornment of this work. I doubt not that Benozzo Gozzoli, who was celebrated for such decorations, was the author of these. Of the merits of the histories, we will now hear two of the most celebrated writers on

This chapel, so important for the history of Christian art, was long forgotten. Its existence was scarcely known, and the learned Bottari, in order to visit it, had to get through the window, as the key of the door was lost. The professors of painting at Rome forbade the study of it to their pupils as dangerous for their taste :

art. M. Seroux D'Agincourt speaks of them thus:—"The ability with which these frescoes are finished is truly prodigious, and nothing can be more delicious to the eye than their colouring. The shadings are not strong, but the chiaroscuro is harmonious. On near inspection, these frescoes have all the graces of miniature. At a distance, the vigour of their tints produces the effect of a bold and free pencilling," etc. He then lauds the artist for the beauty of the expression, in which he recognized a happy imitation of Masaccio. He likewise praises the perspective of the buildings. The criticism of M. Rio is as follows:—"The work which excels that of which I speak (the reliquaries of S. Maria Novella)—I will not say in beauty, as that is impossible, but in dimensions, and perhaps, too, in historical importance, is the great fresco in the Vatican, in which Fra Angelico, who was invited to Rome by Eugene IV., painted, in six compartments, the principal facts of the life of S. Stephen and S. Laurence, thus uniting these two Christian heroes in the same poetic commemoration, as it is the custom of the faithful to invoke them conjointly, since one and the same sepulchre enshrines the ashes of both in the ancient basilica of San Lorenzo, outside the walls of Rome.

"The Consecration of S. Stephen, the Distribution of the alms, and far better still the Preaching, are three paintings as perfect in their style as any of the grandest productions of the most distinguished masters ; it would be difficult to fancy a group that could excel the life and attitudes of these figures, and particularly of the women who are seated and listening to the holy preacher. If the bestial fury of the murderers who stone the Saint be not adequately expressed, we should attribute it to a glorious impotency of that Angelic imagination which teemed with ecstasies of love, and was never accustomed to these dramatic scenes in which it is necessary to depict violent passions.

"The figures are disposed with equal grace and nobility, and this merit that is always to be admired in all the works of the Angelico, is here, if possible, still more admirable, since he has paid marked attention to the costume and other adjuncts belonging to the period, which he copied from the monuments of the Primitive Church. Not so, however, can we speak of the inferior compartments in which the painter has given the histories of S. Laurence." We will finally observe with Professor Rosini that, in this work, more than in any other, he seems to have enlarged his style, and to have carried it to such perfection as to dispute the palm with the noblest geniuses of that age. For the altar of the same chapel he also painted a Deposition from the Cross, which, I believe, is now lost."—MARCHESI, by Meehan, vol. i., p. 243.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

a sad proof of the debasement of artistic and religious feeling. The sovereign pontiffs have preserved these masterpieces for us. Gregory XIII. (1572-1585) ordered the first restoration of them, as the inscription under the Distribution of the Alms by S. Stephen informs us.¹ The inscriptions which set off the altar make us acquainted with other restorations. In 1712, Clement XI. repaired the chapel, ruined by the injuries of time, and restored it for worship. Benedict XIII., of the Order of Friar-Preachers, consecrated the altar, April 7th, 1725.² Lastly, the sovereign pontiff, Pius VII., in 1815, had this picture by Beato Angelico di Fiesole repaired and cleaned, *to preserve for the desire and study of all* the only masterpiece of this great painter which Rome possesses.³

Beato Angelico inaugurated art at the Vatican, and the painters who succeeded him could find beautiful inspirations and great instructions in his works. If the Sistine chapel is compared with the chapel of Nicholas V., it will be seen that art lost more than it gained amidst its material progresses. The artists who were successively called to work at the Sistine chapel,

¹ Gregorius XIII. Pont. Max.—Egregiam. hanc picturam a F. IOANNE Angelico—Fesulano. Ord. Præ. Nicolai. papæ. V Ivssv—elaboratam ac. vetustate. pæne. confvmpit.—instaurari mandavit.

² Sacellvm—A Nicolao V—Pont. Max.—Constructum—a Fr. IOANNE—Fesulano. celebri. Illius—evi pictore—Sacris—imaginibus—decoratum—† CLEMENS XI—Pont. Max.—Temporis. Inivriis—Deformatum—Ac obsoletum—pristinam—in speciem—usumque. Restituit. Anno Salutis—M D CC XII. † BENEDICTVS XIII. Ord. prædicator. altare. hoc. erexit. et consecrav. Die xi. Aprilis. M D CC XXV.

³ Anno M DCCC XV—PIVS VII. Pont. Max.—Pictvram. IOANNIS Angelici Fæsvlani—viri beati—Historiæ præconio nobilitatem—negligentia temporum obsoletam—uti quod unicum pictoris elegantissimi—In Urbe exstat artis exemplum—omnium studio et desiderio ne deesset—Squalore deterfo et lumine addito—restituendam curavit.

did not understand the laws of monumental decoration as the great school of Giotto had done: the figures are too small for the space. Michael Angelo, who ended their work, fell into the contrary error; he piled up colossuses, as the Titans did mountains. None will dispute his prodigious talent; but if they can set themselves free from the admiration excited by the powerful figures of the sibylls and prophets on the vaulted roof, which are still more astounding than those of the Last Judgment, they will, indeed, be obliged to acknowledge that there is a violation of the laws of beauty and of monumental painting. A jury composed of the great artists of Rome and Athens would have condemned such a masterpiece. Michael Angelo is an unique and a solitary genius, who has ruined all that have wished to imitate him. He has violated taste by making it believed that beauty is in strength and great dimensions. He it is who has procured us all those ridiculous giants with which the schools of the decline have encumbered the churches and palaces of Italy: he it is who invented the theatrical contrivances of our cupolas and the rout of figures which spoil the architecture under pretext of decorating the ceilings. The ancients, if they returned, would treat us as barbarians.

In the Vatican, as elsewhere, art deserted the sanctuary for the apartments of princes. The holy patronage of Eugenius IV. and of Nicholas V. was replaced by that of the Medici and the Borgia. The treasures art owed to Christianity were squandered on the caprices of the passions: the impure images of the gods profaned the Vatican as they formerly did the sanctity of

Calvary, and sacrilegious hands dared to trace upon its walls subjects which might have made the debauchees of heathen Rome blush. The sovereign pontiffs have wished to have these obscene paintings effaced; but men are always found to elude their orders and defend these infamies as models of art and the Palladium of civilization.¹ For all that, history speaks loud enough in ancient and in modern times. Moral beauty is inseparable from natural beauty; God has made them for each other, like the soul for the body; and when man separates them for the benefit of his senses, art is no more than a tree which has lost its sap, a corpse given up to the corruption of death.

¹ Gregory XVI. ordered the paintings to be effaced which are shown to strangers like the secret museum at Naples. They have been only covered with a cloth. Pius IX. has in vain given orders to veil the nude caryatides at the arch of the hall of Constantine; the painter of the Renaissance had a way for compressing the indecency by making them hermaphrodites.



CHAPTER XIII.

PAINTINGS IN ORVIETO CATHEDRAL, AND PICTURES AT NAPLES:



OUR humble religious enjoyed the sweetest glory which can crown man on this earth. Admiration was even exceeded by the affection he inspired: popes and princes sought his friendship as much as his works.

Whilst he was painting the chapels of the Vatican, the city of Orvieto was going on with its cathedral commenced at the end of the thirteenth century, and called for the most renowned artists of the world to embellish it. Beato Angelico was applied to, and his assistance was obtained. The unfinished work of our painter marks, in our opinion, the apogee of his talent, and may bear comparison with what art has produced most perfect.

On this work of Beato Angelico we possess the most

documents ; and they not only concern our painter, but also give us valuable information on the organization of mediæval art. It is impossible to understand the history of art without taking into account the influence which the popular element has exercised over its developement. The popular element is the cause of the greatness of art ; it is the soil which bears it, the light which makes it fruitful. The masses are as necessary for artists as the crowd is for orators. The people are the only protectors rich enough in power and means to encourage art, which requires the thought of all to render, treasures to lay out, the multitude to comprehend it, and a long posterity to admire it. What is art patronized by one man, even were he master of the world ? Genius itself, if it is not defeated by intrigue, must be inspired with a caprice, to obtain a protection which passes away like him who grants it. Its work, often haggled over, goes to disappear in the room of a palace which will be visited by a revolution, and it will fall as an heritage or a conquest into ignorant and mercenary hands ; whilst the work of art patronized by the people and consecrated in their monuments, shines for the eyes of all, and may hope for ages of immortality.

But if the people do much for art, art also recompenses the people ; it instructs them, elevates them, and withdraws them from their material and dependent life by giving them pure enjoyments, the contemplation of the beautiful, the greatest good man can claim. Art makes him know and love his country, and inspires him with the virtue of devotion ; it tells him of the past and points out to him the future. Monuments

are forefathers that look down on him, and give testimony of him to his descendants.

Religion alone is able to unite the people and art: it is equally necessary to both, and it is in the temple that it consecrates their alliance. The rocks of the Parthenon and the slopes of the Capitol have seen the people and art mount up to the altars of the gods, and celebrate together festivals so magnificent that they seemed to justify the triumph of error; but a Christian people has nothing to envy the people of Rome and Athens for, as their alliance with art is far more intimate and far more admirable. The cathedral is the work in which art appears in all the majesty of its unity. A divine doctrine lays the foundations of it upon an immovable rock, and traces the symbolical plan; architecture raises the walls, pillars, arches and noble spires: it entrusts the embellishment to sculpture and painting, which it keeps in a perfect hierarchy; then, when its work is over, and the rich light of the windows shines peacefully on all the wonders of the chisel and the pencil, the Church displays the pomp of her liturgy, and, amidst the chant of psalms and the memorials of the saints, adores God Himself, who crowns all by His presence. It is impossible for art and the people to find better conditions for uniting.

The cathedral is not like the heathen temple which concealed a statue in its walls, and sent its priest to make a little incense smoke on the steps of the portico. The Church is a mother who opens her bosom to receive her children, and to distribute truth and goodness to each one. The cathedral is altogether for the people:

it is their life, faith, hope, baptism, family, glory, history and eternity. Before ignorance and falsehood had estranged the people from the cathedral, and had disabled them for understanding it, they found in it joy, courage and wealth: they received there a simple and powerful doctrine, and knew what the most learned are now ignorant of, the problem of their destinies, their origin and their end. The statues and glass-windows were their library, and they read in an open book all the history, the poetic legends, and the astonishing symbolism, of which we scarcely find out the meaning.

Can we be surprised at the beauty of the Christian monuments of the middle ages? Whilst feudalism was tearing itself to pieces in its bloody struggles, and building castles to oppress others or to defend itself, the people were building cathedrals; there was the centre of the commonalty, the donjon of their powers; and they neglected nothing in order to make the edifice worthy of God and of His adorers. This noble ambition explains the wondrous developements of art in the Italian republics of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and it also makes it understood why artists remained Christian: the people kept them nobly employed on their cathedrals, whilst literature had already become corrupted by selling its verses to princes and their passions. Between the towns and commonalties there was a rivalry who should have the largest and most magnificent church. The people were once consulted by Phidias whether he should employ marble or ivory in making the statue of Minerva? There was a vast difference in the price of the materials;

but the people replied to Phidias, "Do what will be most worthy of the city."

The people of Florence said the same to their architect Arnolfo, when he set about erecting Santa Maria dei Fiori:—"Forasmuch as the sovereign prudence of a great people wills that they proceed in affairs of such sort that their external works prove that they are as enlightened as generous, we ordain to Arnolfo, architect of our commonalty, to make the model or design for the rebuilding of Santa Reparata so great and magnificent, that it be impossible for art and human power to imagine anything more beautiful and more vast. This is what has been said and counselled by the wisest of the city in public and private assemblies. For the affairs of the commonalty ought not to be undertaken if it is not intended to render them worthy of an immense spirit, as it is composed of the soul of all the citizens united in the same will."¹

All the Italian Republics gave the same programme, and they were faithful to it. They have done well; their churches are the only things remaining to them of ancient days. Who would now turn out of his way to climb the rock upon which the city of Orvieto uprears itself, were it not to admire the marvels of its cathedral, in which, for three centuries, a religious people entrusted the expression of their faith to the most celebrated artists of the world?

A priest had doubted the real presence of our Lord upon the altars; and the Holy Victim had been pleased to raise the veil which hides Him from our senses, and to allow the Divine Blood shed on Calvary to

¹ *Cantu, Histoire universelle, tom. xi., p. 578.*

flow anew. The corporal was soaked with it. The people were witnesses of this miracle which attests the mystery the most consoling to human nature : and to preserve this sensible proof which divine goodness had vouchsafed to give them, they raised a monument to receive the linen steeped in the Precious Blood, but did not find it magnificent enough. Yes, that vast basilica, with its courses of white and black marble, the façade so rich in sculpture and mosaics, the columns, statues, lancet arches, paintings, gold, stained glass; the reliquary with its enamels and precious stones, all is an act of faith in the Real Presence ! The people believed that God was pleased to dwell with them ; and, if they had been able, they would have raised to Him a dwelling still more magnificent.

This church, the first stone of which was laid November 13th, 1290, was a national work, carried on with enthusiasm and perseverance throughout the revolutions and turmoils of the fourteenth century. The history of this building is like that of other celebrated mediæval monuments in France and Italy. It makes us acquainted with the means then adopted to ensure the completion and perfection of it.

So soon as the inhabitants of Orvieto had decreed the work, “ they established a magistracy composed of several intelligent and upright persons, who were named superintendents of the fabric ; they were to call in the best artists, and to pay the works agreed on with the chamberlain. These magistrates were obliged to give an account of the receipts and expenditure to the representatives of the people, who were the captain,

consuls, judge and syndics. They were distinguished from the other functionaries of the city by the title *della fabbrica*. Their escutcheon is still seen, as in many other places, particularly in Tuscany.”¹

There was also a lodge of artists “near the cathedral-church, a house where the architects, painters, and sculptors assembled to present their designs and models to the master of masters, and to carry them out when they had been approved by him, by the chamberlain, and by the superintendents. Each art had its chief, and over all was placed the master of masters, who was ofteneft an architect, painter, or sculptor.”² This unity of direction is a happy condition of success.

The first master of masters was Lorenzo Maitani, an artist of Sienna, who directed the works for forty-three years. He incessantly traversed the whole of Italy to choose men and materials. Rome furnished him with its ancient marbles, Sienna with its black marble, Carrara with white marbles, Saint-Anthime with alabaster; and he had legions of artists under his orders. Those who quitted Rome during the great heats worked for Orvieto at Albano and Castelvandolfo.³

When Maitani died, his two sons succeeded him; only one other artist, Meo d’Orvieto, was added to them. At this time, merit alone seems to have decided the

¹ *Storia del Duomo di Orvieto, scritta dal padre maestro Guglielmo della Valle, Minor Conventuale*, one volume in quarto, with an atlas: Rome, M DCC XCI, page 97.

² Era questa una casa vicina al Duomo, in cui architetti, e pittori e scultori, si radunavano per presentare al maestro de’ maestri il loro disegni e modelli per eseguirli, dopo che da esso, dal camerlingo, e dai soprastanti, erano stati approvati . . . Ogni arte aveva il suo capo, e a tutti presideva il maestro de’ maestri che per lo più era architetto, pittore o scultore.—*Storia del Duomo*, p. 101.

³ *Storia del Duomo*, p. 103.

choice of the artists; the interests of the monument prevailed over private interests and local intrigues. The greatest part of the directors of the work were from Sienna or Pisa, but none were excluded, and a Frenchman was preferred before an artist of Orvieto in 1446, the period at which Beato Angelico was sent for.¹

The most celebrated artists of Europe gave their concurrence; the Dominican Fra Guglielmo of Pisa sculptured the bas-reliefs of the façade; Donatello made the statue of S. John Baptist, in 1423; and in the same year, Gentile da Fabriano painted a Madonna. After Beato Angelico, Luca Signorelli, Perugino and Pinturricchio also executed paintings at Orvieto. For decorating the baptismal fonts, an artist of Friburg was chosen, who passed for the most skilful sculptor of his time; but as soon as he was at the work his style was not liked, and he was replaced by Jacopo Guido, from Florence.²

A matter worthy of remark is the contingent of artists furnished by the religious orders. Besides Beato Angelico and Fra Guglielmo, the Order of S. Dominic supplied two glass-painters, Fra Mariotto, and Fra Mariano who was afterwards rejected kindly because he did not know how to draw well enough. The *fabbrica* ordered a substitute for him to be sought at Sienna and Florence, if it were necessary. A Cistercian, Fra Francesco d'Antonio, executed the stained

¹ *Storia del Duomo*, docum. lxx, p. 304.

² In the list of foreign artists we also find, in the sixteenth century, two French Mosaisists, Ferdinand Sermois and Francois-Etienne; a Flemish painter, Henri (1563), and Nicolas Cordier, a Lorrainefe, who was living at Rome, and called himself Il Franciofetto.—*Storia del Duomo*, p. 170.

glafs placed behind the high altar, representing the life and miracles of the Bleffed Virgin.

Fra Francesco, of the Order of Minors, worked at the glafs in 1446, at the fame time as the Benedictine Dom F. Baroni of Perugia. It was this religious who fent for Beato Angelico to Orvieto.

The deliberation which concerns our painter is dated May 11th, 1447.

“Confidering that the chapel facing the one of the Corporal is blank . . . it would be fitting to have it painted by fome good and famous master-painter. At this moment there is in Orvieto a religious of the obfervance of S. Dominic, who has painted, and is painting, the chapel of our moft holy Father in the palace of the Vatican, who might perhaps be perfuaded to come and paint the chapel; *he is the moft famous of all the painters of Italy*, and would paint in the church only three months in the year, that is, in June, July, and Auguft, becaufe during the other months he is obliged to ferve the Holy Father; but in thefe three months he will not remain in Rome. He afks a falary for himfelf at the rate of 200 ducats of gold a-year, with the expenfes of food, and colours, fcaffolding, etc. And this master-painter is named Fra Giovanni.”¹ The council met again June 2nd in the

¹ Congregatis in unum in refid. camerarii . . . pro laboreris d. E. ordinandis ad honorem d. E., confiderato quod cappella nova . . . in confpectu cappelle corporalis eft fciabbida . . . et pro honore d. E. eft dipingenda per aliquem bonum et famofum mag. pictorem, et ad prefens in Urbe veteri fit quidam, etc., obfervantie S. Dominici qui pinfit et pingit cappellam SS. D. N. in palatio ap. S. Petri de Urbe qui forfan veniret ad pingendum d. E. et EST FAMOSUS ULTRA ALIOS PICTORES YTALICOS, et ftaret ad pingendum in d. E. tantum tribus in anno menfibus, fcilicet Junio, Julio, Augufto; et quia aliis menfibus . . . non vult ftare Rome, et petit falarium pro fe ad rat. cc ducat. auri in anno, cum expenfis

same year, and the chamberlain announced that "Fra Giovanni di Pietro has accepted the invitation given him, to come and paint the new chapel; and as he is to be in Orvieto a little before the feast of *Corpus Domini*, it is necessary for the council to decide on what he shall paint. After much speaking, it is decided that they shall wait for the painter, and determine when they have his advice." Beato Angelico, in fact, arrived; and, June 14th, the deed was passed. "After several conversations with the painter, it is unanimously agreed on every point. The chamberlain has led the religious, Fra Giovanni di Pietro, master-painter, of the Order of Preachers of the Observance of S. Dominic, to the new chapel to be painted, and there given over to him all the work on the following conditions:—

"Fra Giovanni shall himself work on the pictures, together with Benozzo Cesi of Florence, Giovanni Antonio of Florence, and Jacopo de Poli, well and diligently, and with befitting skill and care.

"Also he shall labour and take care that the figures of the pictures be beautiful and commendable. Also the undertaking shall commence to-morrow, June 15th instant. Also every year he shall paint, with the above-named persons, in June, July, August and September, until the entire chapel is painted. Also he shall do all without fraud and deceit, at the commendation of any good master-painter.

"And for the aforesaid, the chamberlain, in the name of the council, has solemnly promised and

ciborum, et colores, pontes, &c., et vocatur d. magister pictor frater Johes.—
Storia del Duomo, docum. B, p. 306.

sworn to the same Fra Giovanni, present and accepting for himself and his heirs, and to Benozzo, Giovanni and Jacopo, to give and pay effectually to Fra Giovanni, for his labours, a salary for the four months every year at the rate of 200 ducats of gold, of the value of seven pounds each, for every complete year: that is, the third part of 200 ducats for the four months. Also to Benozzo, every month, seven ducats of the same value, to Giovanni two ducats at the same rate, and to Jacopo one ducat. Also he shall give to the said master-painter all the colours necessary for the pictures, over and above the salary.

"Also for their expences, besides the salaries, bread and wine as much as is sufficient for them, and twenty pounds of pennies every month whilst they are at work.

"Also he shall pay the expences for them up to the present day.

"Also the said master Fra Giovanni, whilst the scaffolding is being put up, shall make the design of the pictures and figures which he is to paint on the vault of the chapel.

"All which the parties have mutually promised to observe, with good faith, etc. Witnesses, etc."¹

¹ Die xiv Junii M cccc xlvii, in Dei noe . . . Amen. Congregatis . . . et habitis inter eos et pictorem multis colloquiis super omnibus et singulis . . . unanimiter . . . Camerarius conduxit ad pingendum cappellam novam versus episcopatum . . . religiosum virum frem. Johem. Petri magrum pictorem ord. Predicatorum observantie Sci Dominici ibid. presentem et acceptantem, et picturas totius dicte cappelle locavit d. mag. fratri Johi. cum pactis quod d. frater Johes . . . ferviret ad picturas pred. cum persona sua. Item cum persona Benotii Cesi de Florentia. Item cum persona Johis Antonii de Florentia. Item cum persona Jacobi de Poli, bene et diligenter, et cum ea qua decet solertia et sollicitudine,

Item quod faciet et curabit quod d. figure dd. picturar. erunt pulchre et lauda-

Beato Angelico forthwith set about the work, but a few days after, June 26th, a misfortune occurred which deeply afflicted him. One of his pupils, Antonio Giovanelli, whilst setting up a scaffold, was hurt by the falling of a beam, and died of the injury. The *fabbrica* ordered the chamberlain to furnish all the expences of the illness and burial.¹

Beato Angelico set himself to the work, along with Benozzo and Jacopo de Poli. He also employed two painters of Orvieto, Pietro di Nicolas and Giacomo di Pietro, who probably executed the ornaments. The work went on until September 28th, and on that day our painter gave an acquittance for 103 florins of gold for himself and his pupils.² He departed for Rome

biles. Item conductio pred. incipiat cras que est xv presentis mensis Junii. Item quolibet anno pinget cum premisssis hoibus, Junio, Julio, Augusto et Septembri quousque tota cappella fuerit dipincta. Item quod omnia faciet sine fraude, dolo, ad commendationem cujuslibet boni mag. pictoris.

Et pro predictis camerarius . . . promissit solemniter et juravit eidem F. Johi presenti et acceptanti pro se et suis heredibus, et dd. Benotio Johi et Jacobo dare et solvere cum effectu eid. fratri Johi pro suis laboribus, salario pro dd. iv mensibus quolibet anno quousque ec. ad rat. cc ducatorum auri valoris vii librar. pro quolibet et pro quolibet anno completo, videlicet pro dd. iv mensibus, tertiam partem cc ducatorum. Item Benotio quolibet mense septem ducatos ejusdem valoris, Johi duos ducatos ad d. rat., et Jacobo unum ducatum. Item dabit d. mag. pictori omnes colores incumbentes necessarios pro d. picturis ultra d. salaria,

Item pro eorum expensis ultra salaria panem et vinum quantum sufficiet eis, et xx libras denar. quolibet mense, dum laborabunt.

Item perfolvet eis expensas usque ad presentem diem.

Item quod d. mag. f. Johes, interdum fiunt pontes, faciat designum picturarum et figurarum quas debet pingere in volta d. cappelle.

Que omnia vicissim . . . promiserunt attendere, bona fide, ec. ec. . . Acta presentib . . . testibus.

¹ Antonius Giovanelli qui (xxvi Junii) dum stabat ad faciendum pontem in cappella nova, cecidit in stentu unius trabis cadentis super eum. Sed ut transeat in bonum exemplum . . . ordinatur quod camerarius possit ei subvenire tam in infirmitate ad mortem quam in sepultura ejus, absque suo damno et prejudicio. —*Storia del Duomo*, p. 128.

² Religiosus vir Fr. Johes Petri mag. picturarum et ordinis observantie Frum

again, leaving his work incomplete. The subject chosen by Beato Angelico for the decoration of the chapel was the Last Judgment. We have already seen with what skill and grandeur he treated this sublime subject of Christian art. When we know as yet the paintings of Orvieto only by the published engravings, we dread the neighbourhood of Luca Signorelli for the sweet religious of Fiesole. In his compositions at Orvieto, that painter, in our opinion, is superior to Michael Angelo; he has not his anatomical exaggerations and gigantic proportions, and his drawing is truer and more distinguished: and to a remarkable elegance he joins a great vigour of style. He seems to have owed these qualities to the influence of Beato Angelico. Some figures which our painter has executed on a ground of gold are those which most attract the eye and excite admiration. This unfinished work is the one which best shows his talent, and what he would have done if he had had great surfaces to paint, like the artists in the times of Giotto and Raphael. In the three months passed at Orvieto, Beato Angelico painted the Christ and the choir of prophets above the hell. We can judge from this fragment what the whole composition would have been. Christ holds the globe of the world in his mighty hand,

*Predicatorum conductus ad pingendum in cappella nova d. mag. Eccle. cum persona sua et cum personis suis Benozzi Cesi de Florentia, etc. etc., quos secum habuit ad dictam picturam . . . fecit camerario . . . suam . . . contentationem absolutam . . . et pactum de ultra non petendo de centum tribus florenis auri de auro . . . quos debebat habere a d. fabrica tam pro se quam pro suprad. Benozzo et pro tribus mensibus, et se quietum vocabit . . . d. mag. f. Johes juravit ad. S. Dei Evangelia . . . omni tempore attendere observare. Insuper ad majorem cautelam liberavit d. fabricam,—**Storia del Duomo*, docum. LXXIV., 28 Sept., 1447.

and with the other curses the reprobate. Michael Angelo, they say, was inspired by it in the Sistine chapel; he has made only a parody of it by stripping the Christ of its garments and giving it strength without majesty. The group of prophets is perhaps still more admirable. The painters of the Renaissance have done nothing of the like, and these few figures will always be the model of religious and monumental painting, as inspiration, as style, and as execution.

Having returned to Rome, Beato Angelico continued his labours at the Vatican, and perhaps executed some of the pictures we have already spoken of. We attribute to this period, on account of their beauty, two pictures we have had the happiness to find at Naples in the rooms of the Bourbon Museum. They are numbered 296, 298, and, at the time of our journey, were attributed to Tommaso di Stephano, surnamed Giotto (1324-1356). They are certainly neither of his epoch nor in his manner, and we do not hesitate to attribute them to Beato Angelico.

The first (No. 296) is an Assumption. The Blessed Virgin is seated in an elliptical glory. Her hands are joined, and she is clothed in a blue mantle set off with gold ornaments. On her aureola is written, AVE GRATIA PLENA. In the upper part of the picture, our Lord bends towards his mother, and holds out his arms to her as on the reliquary at Santa Maria Novella.¹ The choirs of angels surround their Queen. Those who approach her nearest are doubtless the Seraphim and Cherubim, represented by a double row of winged heads; then come, two and two, the other heavenly

¹ Page 173.

spirits, with their various attributes: the first, clothed in blue robes, hold with both hands an object shaped like an almond, of the same colour as their robes. The Thrones are thus represented in the mosaics of the Baptistry at Florence. The second, clothed in lively red, hold a standard, a globe and a gold rod: these are the Dominations. The Principalities carry a standard crested with a red cross; the Powers, a knight's armour, a cross-bearing buckler and a sword. The Virtues have golden robes, and hold a banderole, on which is written *Virtutes*.¹ The last two orders, the Archangels and Angels, are playing on various musical instruments, like those we have seen in the other pictures. This composition is executed on a ground of gold; it is worthy of our painter, and can have come only from his thought and pencil.

The picture numbered 298 represents the miracle of our Lady *ad Nives*. This subject, which brings to mind the foundation of Santa Maria Maggiore, must have been chosen and executed at Rome by our painter, who, without doubt, went very often to pray in that church, the most charming of the basilicas in the eternal city. Our Lord and the Holy Virgin appear in the sky, and preside over the scene passing in the lower part. The earth is covered with snow, and Pope Liberius traces in it with a small mattock the plan of the church which the patrician John and his wife had received orders to build. The Sovereign Pontiff is mitred and gloved. Behind him, a group of cardinals

¹ At the Baptistry of Florence, the Virtues are represented as driving away the devils and healing the sick. Beato Angelico has followed the classification of S. Bernard rather than that of S. Denis the Areopagite.

and magistrates is seen; in the middle, some clerics carry the cross and holy water. The assistants are in pious admiration, and look up at the sky. The sun shining on the personages and buildings in the background, show the time of the year at which they then were. All the figures are drawn and modelled with the firmness which marks the last years of Beato Angelico.

It is impossible for us to explain why Beato Angelico did not finish his paintings at Orvieto. Certainly his own will had nothing to do with it; he must have desired to acquit himself of his engagement; but perhaps the Pope did not let him leave, or his health hindered his journey. It is positive that the *fabbrica* of Orvieto hoped for his return up to the last moment. Many painters begged to carry on his work, but they still waited, until "envious death broke his pencil, and his beautiful soul winged its way amongst the angels, to make paradise more joyous."¹

¹ La morte invidiosa ruppe il pennello di lui, e la sua bell' anima volò fra gli Angeli a fare più ridente il paradiso."—*Storia del Duomo*, p. 132.



CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH OF BEATO ANGELICO.—HIS EULOGY.—HIS PUPILS AND HIS INFLUENCE.



MIDST the magnificent tombs which adorn the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, between the sacristy and the apse, is a simple tombstone, the sight of which causes a tender and respectful emotion. A religious is represented there sleeping the blessed sleep of those who die in the Lord. That marble points out the place where the body of Beato Angelico da Fiesole was deposited, who died at Rome, March 18th,¹ 1455, in his sixty-eighth year.

History has not preserved for us any detail of his last moments. He disappeared amidst his brethren,

[¹ Leandro Alberti, who is the authority for the day of Beato Angelico's death, dates it xiii. kal martii, which is Feb. 18th.—TRANSLATOR'S note.]

like the autumnal sun athwart the trees of a peaceful vale whilst shining on them with its sweetest rays. An end full of calmness and of hope must have crowned a life so pure and active. From what point of the past could trouble come? From his early youth his intellect had been applied to things divine, his will had been subjected to the wholesome yoke of obedience, and his memory could only offer him chaste recollections and pious images. He recalled his pictures as prayers. All the heavenly world he had represented was stirred, and came to smile on him: his agony was an ecstasy; and when, according to the ceremonial of the Order, the religious of the convent went to range themselves around his bed and sing *Salve Regina* the last time for him, the Queen of heaven doubtless heard their prayer. She who had been the sweetness, joy and hope of his life; she on whom he had called with so many sighs, and whose love he had gained by so many masterpieces—Mary, turned eyes full of mercy on her beloved painter, and showed him, on the utmost verge of his exile, the blessed Fruit of her womb. Angels encompassed him with their joyous songs, and when the hour of his deliverance came, the heavenly spirit, to whom his pilgrimage had been entrusted, freed him from his body in a fraternal embrace, and led him triumphant into paradise, which he gladdened with his presence.

On earth he was bewailed. The sovereign pontiff, Nicholas V., desired himself to compose his epitaph, in which he ranked his virtue much above his talent;

for Christ rewarded less the works of his genius than the charity of his heart.¹

People called him The Blessed, *il Beato*, and posterity has kept this beautiful name for him. The Church might have decreed him the honours of the altar; for what has been said of the writings of S. Thomas can be said again of the pictures of Beato Angelico: they are so many miracles. Holiness beams forth from them, and those very persons whom the errors of the world disable from understanding them well, experience a charm which gently troubles them and invites them to a better life. Since these pictures have been in existence, how many souls have found pure joys and heavenward longings in them! The truth there appears with a beauty victorious over all hesitation and all weakness: and some Protestants have declared that God had waited for this means to determine their conversion. Many have had copies of these masterpieces made at Florence, in order to carry them into their own country as arguments in

¹ HIC. JACET. VEN. PICTOR.

FR. JO. DE FLOR. ORD. P.

M.

C. C. C. C.

L.

V.

Non mihi fit laudi, quod eram velut alter Apelles,
Sed quod lucra tuis omnia, Christe, dabam.
Altera nam terris opera exstant, altera cœlo;
Urbs me Joannem flos tulit Etruriæ.

The word *tuis* indicates the religious of his Order rather than the poor. Beato Angelico belonged to the reform and possessed nothing; still his superiors could have entrusted him with the distribution of the money he gained.

[An error in the date given by M. Cartier is here corrected. Marchese refers *tuis* to the poor. TRANSLATOR'S note.]

favour of the Church alone capable of inspiring and realizing such creations.

Now that we have followed the stream of this blessed life even into eternity, and admired the riches of its banks, we will cast a last glance at it, to embrace the whole and resume its instructions.

One of the merits of our age is the serious study it is making of the past. The French revolution had separated us from it by ruins. All that was great amongst the nations had disappeared under the efforts of an arrogant and depraved reason; but here are we exploring the fields of history afresh, and inquiring of tradition our way towards the future. We are studying events and their causes, doctrines and their results; and if we are still awandering, we have, in our perseverance and good faith, a certainty of life and salvation. One of the happiest symptoms of this movement is the homage paid to Christian art. In the admiration bestowed on the monuments of the middle ages, there is something else besides the caprice of fashion; there is a feeling of respect for the religion which produced such wonders. This return towards Christian art must be intelligent: to wish to copy its outward forms without entering into its spirit, is to doom ourselves to a servility which would be to Christian art what hypocrisy is to virtue. The study of a painter's works calls for still more criticism and discernment than in architectural monuments, because beauty is more individualized in them, and it is necessary to distinguish that beauty from whatever defects the nature of the artist may have put into them. In writing the life of Beato Angelico with

love, we have not pretended to bring him forward as the sole and necessary master of whoever aspires to produce Christian art again: this would be to serve badly the cause which we wish to defend. On the contrary, we hold to making it known in all truth, without fearing to tarnish so unfulfilled a glory. We go on then to examine the place Beato Angelico occupies in history, what distinguished him from his contemporaries, the character of his genius, his qualities, his defects, and the utility which may be drawn from the study of his works in our own time.

When Beato Angelico appeared, the great school of Giotto was declining; art was losing that unity of doctrine and means, of which Orcagna was the most illustrious representative. The programmes given by the Church were modified, the traditional types neglected; architecture, sculpture and painting were becoming isolated, and were seeking their particular fortunes in the progress of details. The posterity of Niccola of Pisa especially, more and more enamoured with the antique, sacrificed the Christian thought to the learned form. Natural beauty unhappily tended to separate itself from moral beauty. The stream that issued from the catacombs saw its course divided. Its waves, which had satisfied the faith of nations for so many ages, were diverted from their consecrated bed to satisfy the senses, and to be defiled amidst the joys of the world. Only a feeble part, true to its banks, was to glide along in solitude for the good of pure souls. Two great names personify these two branches of art, Ghiberti and Beato Angelico. The sculptor of the Baptistery-gates at Florence did works which Greeks

might have admired : the religious of Fiesole painted figures that gladdened angels.

Beato Angelico belonged to the traditional school of the fourteenth century. He was the direct heir of the ancient masters by his faith and works ; and his great compositions at San Marco, at the Vatican, and at Orvieto prove how well qualified he was to execute great monumental painting ; but the wants of his soul, as well as the deviation of public taste, gave another direction to his talent.

His piety removed him from the world, and in the peace of the cloister he sought a shelter against the temptations of glory and the rivalries surrounding him. For him art was a sweet and solitary contemplation of the divine goodness ; his pictures were prayers at the feet of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin ; they issued from his pencil like ejaculations from his heart. They were not great pages to teach the people ; they were pious images to charm the devotion of his brethren, Madonnas that inspired purity, angels that reflected the joys of heaven, and lives of saints which had the gracefulness and simplicity of the mediæval legends.

He would have wished his masterpieces shut up in the sanctuary of his religious family, but their sweet perfume attracted the admiration of men. Obedience obliged him to show himself in broad daylight ; and renown, seduced by his virtue, led him to the eternal city to decorate the august palace of the sovereign pontiffs.

What was the principal cause of his glory, the pedestal that raises him above his contemporaries and presents him to the astonished gaze of posterity ?

What merit drew on him the eulogies of Michael Angelo and the enthusiasm of his disciple Vasari, the painter who, from the nature of his talent and the prejudices of his school, was the most unfitted to appreciate mystical painting? Beato Angelico had a power before which the world itself bows down without understanding it. Sanctity is a resemblance with God, that places on man, as on the face of Moses, a light which escapes from his features and his works. Let it beam forth from the form of a sister of charity or from the pictures of a painter, that heavenly brightness inspires respect and captivates the libertine himself. Vasari is the echo of a secular tradition which surrounds Beato Angelico with a divine aureola. The historian of the Renaissance represents him to us as painting his Christs and Madonnas on his knees and in ecstasy; all he relates shows us the meekness of his soul, the simplicity of his obedience, and the humility of his genius. The good servant had made the talent fructify a hundredfold which his master had entrusted to him; in place of burying it in the earth of the world, he had placed it in the bank of religious life. There all his hours had been productive, and his soul had become rich in knowledge and in love. The Sovereign Pontiff judged him worthy of the archbishopric of Florence, but he avoided the honours by causing his friend S. Antoninus to be nominated in his stead, and he continued to diffuse his light and charity on his pictures and into the bosom of the poor.

The talent of Beato Angelico was the ornament of his virtue. He knew not the ambition which lengthens

the watchings of the artist, and makes him purchase success so painfully. To him labour was without sorrow. He cultivated painting as Adam did the earthly paradise; his pictures were the flowers God produced in his soul, and he let them grow in all their freedom, fearing to mar the Master's work by a knowing culture. Vasari tells us he never would alter his compositions, because he looked on his inspirations as favours from Heaven.¹ The least desire of glory never disturbed his heart: he would make God praised. To what good shall we subscribe his works? Should a mirror arrogate to itself the rays it reflects? He did not pretend to make new compositions. When an image satisfied his piety, why should he not have repeated it, like the prayers we love to say again? Why not imitate the old masters when we have no hope to surpass them? Beato Angelico thought only of loving our Lord and the saints, and of making them loved. He fought the kingdom of heaven before all, and the rest was added unto him.

He had received from Heaven all the qualities that make great artists: the understanding and love of the beautiful, an exquisite sensibility of heart, a fertile imagination, and a hand able and prompt to obey him. If his humility had not removed him from the rivalries of his age, he would have surpassed Ghiberti in the material progress he caused for art in Italy. More faithful than Ghiberti to tradition, he put a simpler and more severe order into his compositions.

¹ Aveva per costume non ritoccare nè riconciare mai alcuna sua dipintura, ma lasciarle sempre in quel modo che erano venute la prima volta, per credere, secondo ch' egli diceva, che così fusse la volontà di Dio.

His Last Judgments especially show remarkable skill in lines and in dispositions of groups. His types are deeply felt; we see that he studied them in meditation and prayer. Those of our Lord and our Lady he painted amidst sighs and tears.¹ His heads of Christ represent well the Divinity clothed in flesh to suffer, and his figures of the Madonna make virginity understood in what it has most sweet and delicate. But what makes his genius shine most is his types of angels, which he knew how to vary infinitely. Whilst looking at the multitude of heavenly spirits, who are adoring, singing, and performing dances and concerts, how shall we not believe that those angels visited his cell, and that he lived with them in brotherly and sweet familiarity? The saints he has represented best are those who by their life and youth approach nearest to the angelic nature.

The drawing of Beato Angelico has not the great character of the school of Giotto. His lines are less simple, less severe, and the richness of the details sometimes obscures the beauty of the whole. Still in his pictures we meet with figures in a high style, which Raphael would not have disowned, and with which he even inspired himself. His movements are true, except when they express violent actions; he was unable to render the passions, so opposed to the meekness of his soul, whilst none equal him when he deals with expressing pious and tender emotions; and then the attitudes and gestures superabound in charming grace and naturalness. The feet and hands of his personages are sometimes neglected: all the life is

¹ Non fece mai Crocifisso che non si bagnasse le gote di lagrime.

concentrated in their countenances. There the artist has displayed all the perfection and splendour of his genius. His heads have a delicacy of expression, a fineness of model not suspected except by trying to copy them. His draperies are noble, full and quiet as in the ancient works. His ornaments are nearly always sober and in good taste. His contours are of an admirable purity. Beato Angelico's colouring is full of light; its tints are lively and its shades transparent. The masses are broadly marked out. We remark especially an extreme facility of pencil, and a simplicity of procedures which particularly agrees with monumental painting. Although no artist's life presents a more perfect unity, a talent more faithful to the same inspiration, we can still distinguish three epochs in the unity of the whole, in which the years and means he passed through are reflected. The first epoch was that of his youth and studies; it began with his exile in Umbria, and was impregnated with the tradition of the primitive schools, to bloom then in the solitude of Fiesole. To the simplicity and purity of his soul he added an exuberance, a tenderness of feeling, an inimitable freshness of expression. If he had all the qualities of youth, he had also its inexperience. His compositions were sometimes too symmetrical; his figures wanted pliancy; he loved richness of ornaments and perfection of details too much. The masterpiece best representing this epoch is the Coronation of the Virgin, in the Louvre.

The second epoch was that of his manhood, which had the convent of San Marco for its theatre. He had corrected his defects, whilst preserving and de-

veloping his good qualities. The study of nature completed that of the old masters; his brush had more breadth and freedom. He united grace with nobleness in an admirable simplicity. His compositions were more varied and more learned, and it is evident that he placed at the service of his sanctity the progress wrought in art by the school of Ghiberti. This was the most productive period of his life, and is fittingly represented by the Descent from the Cross, in the Academy of Fine Arts; by the Adoration of the Magi, in the cell of Cosimo de Medici; and by his Last Judgments.

Lastly, Rome called Beato Angelico within its walls, and he went to inaugurate Christian Art in the Vatican. The spectacle of the eternal city made a profound impression on his soul, and gave fresh power to the maturity of his soul. The chapel of Nicholas V. evinces the study of the antique by the vigour of the drawing, beauty of the draperies, and grandeur of the style. His unfinished work at Orvieto indicates the perfection of monumental painting.

Thus, in these three epochs, Beato Angelico was always on the progress, and demanded the means to give his holy inspirations, in turns, from tradition, nature and the antique. He is and always will be the most perfect model of Christian artists.

His influence on his contemporaries was not in proportion with his superiority. The sovereignty of Giotto, to which he was the worthy successor, ought to have belonged to him; but art had taken another direction, and the patronage of princes had greatly narrowed the domain of religious painting, by replacing the

action so powerful of the church and of the people. Moreover, the humility of Beato Angelico removed him from the movement of his age, and made him prefer the peace of his cell to the distant journeys which would have spread his name. Still he had pupils. Vasari names four of them, Gentile da Fabriano, Zanobi Strozzi, Domenico di Michelino, and Benozzo Gozzoli.

Gentile da Fabriano might have known our painter and appreciated his talent ; but it seems to us difficult to reckon him in the number of his disciples. He was old, and already the head of a school when Beato Angelico was hardly beginning to acquire reputation. We find him at the head of the painters of Orvieto in 1423. Besides, his talent indicates another master. He remained a stranger to the artistic movement of Florence, and preserved a character and meagreness of drawing which recall the schools of the north. Through Venice, he might have been in contact with German artists ; and the eulogies of Roger of Bruges, who proclaims him to be the first painter of Italy, are explained by the natural sympathy he must have had for his style. His inferiority with regard to Beato Angelico is indisputable. It is enough to bring his masterpiece, which is in the Academy of Fine Arts at Florence and represents the Adoration of the Magi, along with the same subject treated by Beato Angelico in the Convent of San Marco. We should say that there was more than a century of progress between the two pictures. The composition of Gentile da Fabriano is plain and constrained ; the drawing is feeble, the personages badly postured and over-

burdened with ornaments, whilst the whole composition of Beato Angelico is broad, learned and full of nobleness and life.

Zanobi Strozzi, Vasari tells us, executed many paintings for Florence;¹ but we do not know what may be now attributed to him. Only a single picture remains to us by Domenico di Michelino, and it is the one we are all astonishment to meet with, to the left on entering the sombre vaults of Santa Maria dei Fiori. It represents Dante returning to offer his immortal poem to the city of Florence. The illustrious exile is crowned with laurels; but his melancholy expression and lonely steps remind us how painful glory was to him. The execution of this picture is firm and lightsome; the work is not unworthy of the master.

The most celebrated pupil of Beato Angelico is Benozzo Gozzoli, who was the faithful companion of all his labours. The happy influence of so holy a direction appears especially in the paintings he executed for the churches of Montefalco. But after the death of the good religious, he gave way to a tendance which approximated him with Ghiberti. His magnificent paintings at the Campo Santo recall more the gates of the Baptistry of Florence than the great traditions of the primitive schools. They represent the luxury and elegance of the Italians rather than the simple life of the patriarchs. Inferior to Beato Angelico in the expression of Christian sentiments, he is also far from equalling him in the purity of the drawing and in the harmony of colours.²

¹ Zanobi Strozzi che fece quadri e tavole per tutta Fiorenza, per le case de' cittadini.

² Vasari passes a high encomium on Benozzo Gozzoli, and represents him to us

Beato Angelico had other pupils, as the archives of the cathedral of Orvieto prove, which mention Jacopo Poli, and Giovanni Giovanelli, whose sad death we have seen. His works continued his instructions, and all those who in Italy still preserved, for some time, the veneration of Christian art, drew thence useful and holy inspirations.¹ Luca Signorelli studied them certainly when he had to go on with the chapel of Orvieto. This painter, who is not sufficiently taken into account in the history of art, is superior to Michael Angelo in that Last Judgment. If he is also too much prepossessed with the science of the nude in the Resurrection of the Dead, at least he has not fallen into the anatomical exaggerations and religious inconsistencies which make the fresco of the Sistine chapel one of the greatest profanations of that sublime subject. His Paradise presents groups worthy of Raphael, and his angels crowning their elect sometimes recall those of Beato Angelico.²

as always Christian, and meriting, by a hard and toilsome life, the happiness of an honoured old age.—*Chi cammina con le fatiche per la strade della virtù, ancorachè elle sia (come dicono) e fassosa e piena di spine, alla fine della salita si ritrova pur finalmente in un largo piano con tutte le bramate felicità. . . . Visse Benozzo, costumattissimamente sempre e da vero cristiano, consumando tutta la vita sua in esercizio onorato: per il che e per la buona maniera e qualità sue lungamente fu ben veduto in quella città.*

¹ Let us be permitted to bring together here the name of Menling with that of Beato Angelico. Never had two painters a genius more like in such different schools. The life of the painter of Bruges is unknown to us; but we may believe that he studied the works of Beato Angelico, since we know that he went into Italy, by the miniatures in the breviary of Grimani which he executed at Venice, and by the portraits he has left at Florence.

² Vafari recalls with pride, having seen, when eight years old, the aged Luca Signorelli, who might himself have seen Beato Angelico. He ends the second part of his work with the eulogy of him, and gives him as the father of the artists of the Renaissance.—*Porremo fine alla seconda parte di queste vite, terminando*

The school of Sienna, so faithful to its religious traditions, must have particularly studied the works of Beato Angelico, and many artists of the fifteenth century seem to have been his pupils. This idea has especially struck us as to Giovanni di Paolo (1403-1482), whose style and grace remind us of the painter of Fiesole. The imitation is plain in his Last Judgment, in the public gallery of Sienna.¹ The composition is the same, and in it we admire the same groups of angels and blessed embracing.

Sano di Pietro (1406-1481) equally approaches our painter for the holiness of his virgins and purity of his angels. His pictures were prayers too, and we well understand the religious, who ordered of him an altar-piece for the souls of her father and mother.²

The school of Perugino, called the school of Umbria, is thought to offer the most perfect expression of mystical painting. Mysticism, alike in painting as in religion, is the higher inspiration of divine love directing all our thoughts and all our works. Had Perugino, like Beato Angelico, this inspiration? We do not think so. We are far from admitting the reproaches for atheism Vasari makes against him; but whilst we quite recognize him as a religious artist, we do not crown him with the aureola of the saints. Perugino received from Heaven a happy and sweet nature, which he cultivated, like Beato Angelico,

in Luca come in quella persona che col fondamento del disegno e degli ignudi particolarmente, e con la grazia della invenzione e disposizione delle storie, aperte alla maggior parte degli artefici la via all'ultima perfezione dell' arte.

¹ Stanza terza, No. 11.

² Stanza quinta, No. 40. On the frame is read, *Questa tavola afata fare suoro Bartholomea di Domenico di Franciescho per lanima di suo padre et di sua madre.*

near the tomb of S. Francis of Assisi. The study of the ancient masters bound him again to the great traditions of Christian art, and he then went to ripen his talent in the midst of the material progresses of the school of Florence. The influence of Andrea Verrochio over him is indisputable; a fellow disciple of Leonardo da Vinci, he caught like him, in the sculptor's workshop, the love of form, the sweetness of model which is one of his most remarkable qualities. He preserved his religious tendencies, which trenched on the paganism that the patronage of the Medici was more and more developing; and this was the principal cause of his reputation in Italy. He must necessarily have had the favour of all those who still had any sense of Christian art in their soul. Still his works rarely offer the holy thoughts and the sap of love we have admired in Beato Angelico's pictures. The search after gracefulness and beauty distracted the painter from his devotion. His Madonnas are too pure not to be Christian, but they are not divine; and his angels, with their flying draperies and affected postures, do not in anything remind us of those that visited the Dominican cell.

The two most celebrated pupils of Perugino, Pinturicchio and Raphael, were faithful to the religious and poetical tendencies of their master. Pinturicchio also approached Beato Angelico by the traditional character of his compositions and by the purity of his talent. Despite the sad patronage of Alexander VI., his pencil remained truly Christian. His chapels in Santa Maria del Popolo, and his History of S. Bernardine of Sienna at *Ara Cœli*, recall, by the sweet-

ness of the expressions and the quietness of the light, the beautiful frescos in the convent of San Marco.

Raphael had a genius too delicate and too exalted not to love and comprehend that of Beato Angelico. Like Perugino, he perfected his talent at Florence; his intimacy with Fra Bartolomeo lets us discover him amidst our painter's masterpieces. He certainly studied them, and the spirit which reflected so well the merits it met with, must have stamped on them the qualities with which he most sympathised.

Some Catholic writers seem to us to fall into a two-fold exaggeration, by setting forth too much the religious sentiment of his first works, and by branding so rigorously the pagan tendencies of his last years. Raphael was neither a saint nor an apostle. To his lot the happiest and most lofty nature had fallen which an artist could, perhaps, possess. The purity of his understanding and tenderness of his heart enabled him to comprehend and love the beautiful, and he had the treasures of a fertile imagination and the resources of a docile hand for rendering it. No one was more capable of cultivating these precious qualities than Perugino. The pupil straightway appropriated the talent of the master, but did not, as he, study the primitive schools, and consequently he separated himself from the great traditions of art. He continued to be a religious painter more from taste than from piety. He chose Christian subjects because they were the most beautiful, and he borrowed from the Gospel somewhat of its purity, because he judged nothing more capable of setting off the human figure. His Madonnas are amiable and chaste, but do they present

that ideal of the Virgin-Mother and of her Divine Son? They are even less faintly than those of Perugino. To propose them above all as the most perfect type of the creature is, it seems to us, to deny all the great traditions of the primitive schools. Even in the Dispute of the Holy Sacrament, which is often cited as the perfection of Christian painting, the subject leaves much to be desired on the score of religious sentiment; it is, if you will, a thesis on the Real Presence written in a fine style, but it is not the admirable poem composed by S. Thomas Aquinas for the feast of the Holy Sacrament.

By thus raising Raphael less high, his fall will be less great; still it was real. Sensuality, by degrees, seduced this artist so loaded with riches and glory; but his hand was never soiled with the excesses which disgraced Marco Antonio and Giulio Romano.

He abandoned Christian subjects for mythological nudities; but was it not very difficult for him to resist being dragged along by his age? And was he not encouraged and applauded in his defection by the princes of the Roman court? It has been wished to make the artistic patronage of Leo X. a glory of the Church. Yes, it is a glory, for that reign has been one of those terrible trials which show that the Church has the everlasting promises, and that the faults of man will never change the doctrine and holiness of the Spouse of Christ.¹

Leo X. continued the traditions of his family, and completed the ruin of Christian art. The world lost

¹ The work of M. Audin on Leo X. is deplorable in the point of view of Christian art.

the comprehension and recollection of it. There were still Christian artists, indeed, who, like the faithful Jews of the captivity, offered to God their works, melancholy as the regrets for fatherland around the hearth of the exile. But these artists no longer formed a people : they no more had laws, worship, or festivals. The hostile conqueror profaned in peace their temples and their altars. What connection have the schools of Titian, of the Caracci, and of Bernini, with the art of which Christ is the type and the inspirer? What did those idolators of drawing, of colour and of manner seek in realizing the dreams of their gross sensuality, if not a little glory and cash? They separated natural from moral beauty; and their art is merely a body without soul which corruption soon deforms. They pretended to imitate the ancients; but they are as far from ancient art, as ancient would have been from Christian art, had they continued its noble destinies.

It is not astonishing that Beato Angelico has been forgotten during these ages of desolation. His name has been buried under the Renaissance, like the sacred tombs which the ruins of a devastated cloister and the brambles of the desert cover. But amidst the vast and serious study we are making of the past, his glory is beginning to appear to us, like the break of a better day. Weary of its unbelieving and frivolous life, art has seated itself on the threshold of our churches, and architecture, sculpture and painting seem fain to unite again under their secular vaults to pray to God together.

This archæological labour, not to be barren, must aid Christian art in finding its great inspirations again.

It is not its business to analyse forms and to catalogue ruins; it must profit by the lessons of history. Life and not death, the scalpel studies on the inanimate remains. These monuments of the past have sprung from an idea and a love which are necessary to continue them. They have a meaning which we must understand, a liturgical and symbolical language which we must speak. Christian art is sleeping like Lazarus; it is necessary to go with Christ to set it free.

Beato Angelico is the best guide to follow in this revival of Christian art, and through him the interrupted tradition must be recovered. After his example, we must firmly believe the dogmas, meditate the Gospel, and admire its beauties in the lives of the saints; and we must also study them in the works of the masters of the old schools, who are the fathers of Christian art, not to imitate the old style, but to follow the types which are the definitions of the truths to be rendered. Art, like religion, has need of a doctrinal authority, which delivers the same truths to all.

The Christian artist must study nature. Is it not to express the truth that God has made all the wonders of the visible world? Let him penetrate it then, and reflect them by striving with his divine model. Let him employ, as a docile language, the nobleness of proportions, the pliancy of lines, the magic of light, the harmony of colours, and let him unite them again on the figure of man, that all nature may glorify its Author.

All these beauties the artist may study in the works of those who have consecrated them to vain idols. Like the people of Israel, he may take the precious

vales of Egypt, to go and sacrifice to the true God in the desert. Ancient art is a rich metal, which his hand may cast to decorate the sanctuary. All that is beautiful is Christian. Let him then appropriate the purity of taste, the perfection of form, the simplicity, the measure which shine in the monuments of Rome and Athens. The paganism we have to dread is the paganism of our souls.

Beato Angelico formed his talent in the three-fold school of tradition, nature and the antique. But what will it avail to have his science without his love? By holiness especially we must imitate him. Christian art is the art of Christ, and it has no other law but the Christian life. The Christian artist then must hear and follow Christ: like Him, he must manifest the truth, and love God and his neighbour whilst forgetting himself. He must renounce all human glory, and ever repeat, in his attempts as well as in his success, the device of the monks and knights of the middle ages, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomine tuo da gloriam.*"



CHAPTER XV.

*BEATO ANGELICO DA FIESOLE JUDGED IN ITALY,
GERMANY AND FRANCE.*



DOUBLE motive engages us to offer a recapitulation of the judgments passed on Beato Angelico da Fiesole in Italy, Germany and France. We shall thus first point out the historical sources whence we have drawn, and be able to acknow-

ledge the services rendered us by those authors who have gone before us. What would our labour be without the aid of their researches and lights? Then we shall reassure ourselves against ourselves. The love we have for our painter necessarily influences the appreciation of his work, and perhaps makes our admiration suspected. We will go on after to call in other witnesses; and we shall be happy to see Beato Angelico crowned by hands more worthy than own.

First of all, it is easy to establish the immense reputation of Beato Angelico during his life. Facts and texts prove that he was then esteemed the first painter in Italy.

At Florence, Beato Angelico was the painter preferred by Cosimo de Medici. Churches and corporations contended for his pictures; the sovereign pontiffs entrusted the decoration of their palaces to him; and the magistrates of Orvieto, in their deliberation of July 11th, 1447, expressed the general opinion when they declared him to be the most celebrated painter in Italy: *Et est famosus ultra alios pictores italicos*.¹ Pope Nicholas V., in the epitaph he composed in his praise, proclaimed him another Apelles: *Velut alter Apelles*. Lastly, the religious of the Order of S. Dominic did not fear to be contradicted by their contemporaries when they also placed him in the first rank in their necrological notices. The chronicle of San Domenico of Fiesole names him eminently the painter: *F. Joannes Petri de Mugello juxta Vichium, optimus pictor*.² The annals of the convent of San Marco, in speaking of Fra Benedetto, say he was brother of Beato Angelico, "that admirable painter: *Germanus fratris Joannis, illius tam mirandi pictoris*."³ In another place, they declare "that he passed for the great master of painting in Italy: *Qui habebatur pro summo magistro in arte pictoria, in Italia*."⁴

Two poets contemporary with Beato Angelico

¹ See page 256.

² *Cronica conv. S. D. de Fesulis*, fol. 97.—1407.

³ *Annalia conv. S. M. de Florentia, A*, fol. 211.—1448.

⁴ *Annalia conv. S. M. de Florentia*, fol. 6.—1449.

equally prove his great reputation. The first is Padre Domenico Corella, of the Order of Friar-Preachers, prior of Santa Maria Novella, who died in 1483. In his poem entitled *De Origine urbis Florentiæ*, he has not placed our painter below Giotto and Cimabue.

*Angelicus pictor quam finxerat ante, Johannes
Nomine, non Giotto, non Cimaboue minor.*

The second is Giovanni di Santi of Urbino, father of the great Raphael, who, in his poem, *Dei fatti ed imprese di Fedrico duca di Urbino*, speaks of Beato Angelico as a glory of Italy:

*Ma nell'Italia, in questa eta presente
Vi fu il degno gentil da Fabriano
Giovan da Fiesole al bene ardente.*

Posterity has not disavowed these encomiums, and three authors repeated them before Vasari. These were,

1. Pere Jean de Toulouse, who wrote the chronicle of Fiesole in 1516. His notice on Beato Angelico and his works is very incomplete.

2. Padre Roberto Ubaldini, annalist of the convent of San Marco, who died at Siena in 1534, has not made known, too, any important fact.

3. Padre Leandro Alberti, the celebrated historian and geographer of Bologna, in his Latin Eulogies on the illustrious men of the Order of Friar-Preachers, has written on Beato Angelico. This is the eulogy which gives us the exact date of his death, and relates, with some variations, his scruples on the occasion of his invitation to dine by Nicholas V.¹

¹ V. *Marchese*, vol. i. p. 294.

B. JO. FESULANUS.—“ Joannes Fesulanus. He-
truscus, vir sanctitate conspicuus, et pingendi arte
peritissimus, anno Domini MCCCCLV. XII. Kalend.
Martii, Romæ vitâ functus est, et in basilicâ S. Mariæ
ad Minervam in sepulchro lapideo tanto viro digno
tumulatus, quod Nicholaus V, Pont. Max. duobus
epitaphiis graphice exornari curavit. Fuit hic vene-
randus vir tantæ observantiæ institutionum suarum,
ut in palatio Pont. Max. consistens, minimam earum
partem haudquaquam omiserit. Nam cùm Nicholaus
Pontifex ei sacellum in palatio, quod adhuc cernitur, pic-
turis exornandum tradidisset, et eum aliquandò viferet,
ac diceret : Hodie, Joannes, volo ut carnibus vescaris,
nimis enim laboribus indulgisti, respondisse ferunt :
Pater sancte, hoc mihi præfectus cœnobii non indulsit.
Et Pontifex : Ipse qui omnibus præsum, tibi hoc in-
dulgeo. Ex hoc enim conjici potest quanta fuerit cum
istò sancto viro patrum nostrorum observantia institu-
tionum, qui sibi non indultum a cœnobii sui præsidente
hoc Pontifici objecerit. Apprimè Nicholaus tantum
vivum coluit, ac veneratus est, ob ejus vitæ integri-
tatem ac morum excellentiam.”¹

Notwithstanding his imperfections, Vasari is the his-
torian who gives us the best information on the painters
anterior to the Renaissance. He published two editions
of his work, the first in 1550, and the second in 1568 ;
and from this last all the other editions have been
taken since his death. The author corrected his
labour with care, threw it into better order, and made
numerous and important additions. These changes

¹ *De viris illust. Ord. Prædicatorum libri sex in unum congesti, auctore Leandro Alberti Bononiensi* ; 1 vol. in fol. ; Bononiæ, 1517, fol. 5, f. 252 a tergo.

are perceived especially in the Life of Beato Angelico, which has gained much both as to form and extent.

It is natural to seek how the facts given by Vasari came to him. The tradition of a painter's life is easily preserved by the study of his works; and Vasari dwelt in the two cities, where the memory of Beato Angelico would be best perpetuated. He would get at it through three artists, with whom he was connected.

Luca Signorelli was contemporary with Beato Angelico, as he was born in 1440 or 1441. He must have been particularly interested in everything that concerned the celebrated painter, whose works he continued in the cathedral of Orvieto. He was a relative of Vasari, who perfectly well recollected having seen and heard him in his youth; and the good octogenarian, who loved chatting very dearly, must have told many a story of old times, when he went to paint a picture for the nuns of Santa Marghereta at Arezzo. Then he became acquainted with the young Vasari, persuaded him to work, foretold a brilliant future for him, and saved him from death by stopping a bleeding at the nose. Vasari declares that he retained an everlasting recollection of him.¹

Vasari's drawing-master also was a French Dominican, Guillaume de Marcillat, who, at that time, was executing the stained glass for the cathedral of Arezzo. Luca Signorelli must naturally have spoken

¹ Et perchè egli intese, siccome era vero, che il sangue in sì grand copia, m'usciva in quell'età dal naso, che mi lasciava alcuna volta tramortito, mi pose di sua mano, un diaspro al collo, con infinita amorevolezza, la qual memoria di Luca mi starà in eterno fissà nell'animo.—VASARI, *Life of Luca Signorelli*.

of Beato Angelico with this religious, who had been able to admire his works in the convents of his Order.

When Vasari studied at Florence under the direction of Michael Angelo, his master made him share his admiration for the wonders of Santa Maria Novella and of San Marco. Lastly we know positively that he was very thick with an old miniature-painter, who received the religious habit from the hand of Savonarola in 1496, only forty years after the death of Beato Angelico. Fra Eustachio had a prodigious memory, and his contemporary Padre Timoteo Bottonio tells us that Vasari obtained very valuable information from him, when he made his first edition of the *Lives of the Painters*.¹ We see how tradition might easily have reached Vasari.

The *Life of Beato Angelico* by Vasari is wanting in judgment, and offers us but little except a confused and incomplete enumeration of his works. What it presents most remarkable, is the sincere enthusiasm of the author for an artist whose genius must have been so little understood at the epoch of the Renaissance. The merit and holiness of the painter put Vasari out and subdued him. Ideas clashed in his mind, as is seen

¹ Fra Eustachio Fiorentino, converso di San Marco, fu un bellissimo spirito et di raro ingegno. Era miniatore eccellente, et fece bellissime opere, in questo genere; specialmente un faltero grande bellissimo che si adopera nel choro di San Marco. Hebbe gran memoria, et tutto che fosse decrepito, recitava a mente infiniti luoghi di Dante, nel quale egli haveva gran pratica. Quando il Vasari scrisse la prima volta le *Vite de' pittori*, veniva spesso a ragionare con questo vecchio, dal quale cavò molti et bellissimi particolari di quegli antichi et illustri artefici. Andava per il convento con un bastone al quale si appoggiava, et mi ricordo che assai temeva il punto della morte, la quale poi gli avvenne dolcissima et placidissima, siccome io proprio vidi. Haveva 83 anni, et morì a 25 settembre. *Annal. mfs.*, vol. ii., p. 301; 1555.—V. MARCHESE, vol. i., p. 175.

in the reflections which commence the *Life of Beato Angelico* in the edition of 1550 and close it in that of 1568.

He certainly acknowledged that "he who does religious and holy subjects should himself be religious. For we know that when these subjects are treated by persons who have little faith and little respect for religion, they often inspire unbecoming and licentious thoughts. We then blame the work as immoral, even whilst we praise the talent of the artist." Still he would not wish "that what is only ill-made and foolish should be found pious, and what is beautiful and good licentious, as they do who condemn as profane the figures of females or of young persons a little more beautiful than ordinary. They do not see that they are in the wrong to blame the painter who has reason to believe that the saints of both sexes in heaven should have a greater beauty than on earth. They show all the perversity of their heart by criticizing like things with a stupid zeal; for if they were as chaste as they would fain appear, they would see there only the love of heaven and a homage paid to God, the supreme perfection, from whom all the beauty of His creatures comes."

The writer of the *Renaissance* here confounds two very distinct beauties, the beauty that pleases the senses, and the beauty that pleases the soul. The figures of females and of young people of whom he speaks are not more beautiful, but more nude than ordinary.

In the second edition of his work, he adds to these reflections an argument which he thinks triumphant. "What would these scrupulous people then do," says

he, "if they found themselves in the presence of living beauties, with voluptuous manners, sweet words, graceful movements, and looks which ravish feeble hearts? What would they become, if the image alone, the shadow of beauty, so overturns them?" We clearly see of what beauty Vasari speaks, and we need not decide if the image offers less danger than the reality. Still Vasari makes his reservations, and declares, "that he would not have it supposed that he approved of the almost entirely nude figures which are depicted in churches. The painter ought to respect the sanctity of the place." Did Vasari apply this reproach to the Last Judgment in the Sistine chapel?

Whilst studying the works of Beato Angelico, we have liked to quote an admirer so little suspected. Vasari seems to have been very well informed on the virtues of Beato Angelico. "Would to God," he cries, "that all religious men would employ their life as this truly Angelic father did! for he consecrated every moment of his to the service of God and to the good of the world and of his neighbour. What more can or ought to be desired than to gain the kingdom of heaven by living holily, and an everlasting fame on earth by making masterpieces? Besides, a talent so superior, so extraordinary, as that of Fra Giovanni could belong only to a man of great sanctity. He avoided all the works of the world, and his life was so pure, he loved the poor in such a manner, that I believe his soul is now in heaven. He continually laboured at painting, and would represent only saints. He might have been rich, but he thought not of it, and he was accustomed to say that true riches consist in

being contented with a little. He might have commanded many, and would not do so, saying that it is less troublesome and safer to obey. He was free to have honours in his Order and elsewhere ; he refused, replying that he sought no other honour but that of avoiding hell and reaching heaven. He was extremely meek and temperate. He was always chaste, and avoided the snares of the world. He was accustomed to say that an artist needed quiet and a peaceful life, and that *he who does the works of Christ, with Christ must always be*. He was never seen to be angry amongst his brethren, a thing which seems very astonishing and hardly to be believed. He was contented to admonish his friends mildly and with a smiling face. He replied with the utmost kindness to those who asked any painting of him, to obtain the prior's consent, and he would satisfy him. In fine, this Father will never be too much praised for his works. His words were full of humility and modesty, his pictures, of grace and devotion. The saints he has represented resemble saints more than all the others. He never would retouch his works or begin them again. He left them as he had done them at first, for he said that it was the will of God. We are assured that Fra Giovanni never touched his pencil without having first said a prayer. He never painted a Crucifixion without watering it with his tears. Thus, in the heads and attitudes of his figures, we see all the goodness, faith and greatness of his Christian soul."

Vasari has been pleased to give a portrait of Beato Angelico ; but this portrait answers badly to the ideal we have formed of him from his life and works.

The most authentic portrait of Beato Angelico is the one on his tomb. The sculptor might have executed it from memory, or even from a plaster mould. Unfortunately, this bas-relief, which is well preserved, is very coarsely done, and can serve but little to make up again the principal features of our Beato. According to tradition, Luca Signorelli, in his fresco at Orvieto, has represented Beato Angelico in one of the religious present at the punishment of the martyrs of Antichrist. The head of that religious has not been drawn from life; it is too young, and Luca Signorelli was not yet sixteen years old when our *young* painter died, in 1455, at the age of sixty-eight. We cannot then receive this tradition.

Vafari's portrait may be more valuable, although it is deteriorated by the pencil of the drawer and by the wood-engraver's execution. This portrait has been copied from the one which Fra Bartolomeo put, they say, in the Last Judgment executed for the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, at Florence. Fra Bartolomeo, in fact, might have copied the authentic portraits which existed in his time in the convents of Fiesole and San Marco. The portraits of the celebrated Dominicans of the reform had been placed in the cell of S. Antoninus, and one of Beato Angelico figured there: another existed also in the refectory of Fiesole, and at the bottom was written,

*Beatus Ioannes pictor, moribus et penicillo
Angelici cognomen jure merito H. C. F.
(hujus conventus filius).*

The most important historian of painting, in Italy, since the Renaissance, is the learned Jesuit Lanzi. But

he speaks very briefly of Beato Angelico, whom he seems to have little studied and little understood.¹ Still he marks out his relations with the school of Giotto, and highly extols the Coronation in the gallery at Florence. He says nothing of the frescoes at the convent of San Marco, and only cites the paintings at Orvieto and Rome from authors, *Opera lodatissima dagli scrittori*. He thought to praise our painter vastly by calling him the Guido of his epoch, *Vero Guido per quella età*. Although this comparison is injurious to Beato Angelico, some truth may still be found in it. There certainly are some material relations between the two painters. Guido reminds us of Beato Angelico by the extreme facility of his pencil, by a certain elegance of proportion, and certain sweetness of colouring: but what have these natural qualities become with the two painters? Beato Angelico developed and perfected them in pure and faintly works, whilst the artist of the decline lavished and dissipated them in vulgar ones. Beato Angelico was always progressing up to his last day, whilst Guido atoned for his easy triumphs in a flighted old age.

The first and real historian of Beato Angelico is Padre Vincenzo Marchese, of the Order of Friar-Preachers. His *Memoirs of the most eminent Dominican Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, is a glory for Italy and for the church.² The author explains, with

¹ LANZI, *Storia pittorica della Italia*; Scuola Fiorentina, Epoca prima.

² *Memorie dei più insigni pittori, scultori e architetti domenicani* del P. Vincenzo MARCHESE, 2e edition, 2 vol., in 12mo; Florence, Felix Le Monnier, 1854. The second edition is much superior to the first. We hope that this excellent work will be translated and published in the *Bibliothèque dominicaine*. [The first edition has already appeared in English, by the Rev. C. P. Meehan, 2 vols., Dublin 1852. TRANSLATOR'S Note.]

great talent, the various merits of the artists of whom he speaks and develops general ideas, which denote a deep insight into Christian art. Beato Angelico is naturally his favourite artist, and he has written his life at the greatest length and with the most love. We are happy to pay our debt of gratitude here, by declaring that Padre Marchese has been our guide throughout all our labour. His researches into the archives of his Order procured new documents for him, which make known the principal phases of Beato Angelico's life. He explains, by his residence in Umbria, his relations with the primitive schools, and thus marks his progress in Christian art. "It is said that Dante, in his *Paradiso*, mated the harmony of verse with the doctrine of S. Thomas Aquinas; I will freely add that Beato Angelico depicted the works of both. There are so many connections between the manner in which these three great Italians explain the supernatural world and clothe it with images, that we may unceasingly compare the words of the writers with the paintings of the artist. The old mystical school of Bologna had confined itself to the representations of certain subjects. Simone painted Crucifixions, and Vitale, Madonnas. Brought up in the poetical and fruitful school of Giotto, Spinello and Memmi, Beato Angelico embraced the whole history of the New Testament, and to it added, from time to time, subjects of legendary painting, in which, in my judgment, he surpassed all who had preceded him. He had consecrated his life and genius to religion; he resolved to follow faithfully the strict canons of Christian art, and all the traditions of the

school of Giotto, of which he may be said to have been the last off-shoot. He never sullied his pencil with profane subjects, and he made it, like the Gospel-word, a means of moral and religious perfection."¹

The residence of Beato Angelico at Fiesole seems also to Padre Marchese to be the most charming and richest period of his talent. "In all the places where he stayed," says he, "he strewed the flowers of art abundantly, and those flowers seem to have been culled in heaven. He scattered them on the mountains of Umbria and of Tuscany, on the banks of the Arno and of the Tiber; but the fairest and most fragrant were reserved for his beloved hill of Fiesole."²

Padre Marchese equally proves the progress of Beato Angelico in the pictures at San Marco. "In these works," says he, "the progress of art at Florence became sensible, in the play of the draperies, the style of his figures, and particularly in the improvement of his manner, by more vigour in the drawing and model." Lastly, he gives the chapel of the Vatican as the apogee of the artist's talent. "We will close by saying with Professor Rosini, that in this work more than in all the others, Beato Angelico improved his manner, and arrived at such a perfection, that he may dispute the palm with the noblest geniuses of his age."³

If the want of some practical and secondary knowledge hinders Padre Marchese from separating the works of Beato Angelico from those of his brother Fra Benedetto, he lays down at least the true principles of the distinction. After having refuted Professor

¹ MARCHESI, vol. i., l. II., ch. 4.

² *Id.*, ch. 5.

³ *Id.*, ch. 8.

Rofini, who wished to recognize the work of each painter by the greater or less richness of their pictures, he adds, "If Fra Benedetto has really painted pictures and frescoes, we must rather seek his works amongst the feeblest paintings we have been accustomed to attribute to Beato Angelico, and especially amongst some frescoes of the convent of San Marco, which are evidently inferior to those of Fra Giovanni."¹

With the soul of a Christian and a religious especially, does Padre Marchese judge Beato Angelico, and we should not end if we were to translate all the passages in which he has expressed his pious enthusiasm. After describing the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin, in the Gallery of Florence, the author adds, "To give the impression this picture causes, is impossible for the most skilful eloquence. The heart has a language which words cannot always express, and we are unable ever to contemplate that picture without feeling ourselves ardent for heaven. Oh! if all those made for the Catholic Church were like it, the unfortunate ones who are separated from our creed would not be able to slander the worship of images; for images, like speech, would be a means of making virtue loved."²

Padre Marchese's work will powerfully contribute to give art that sublime mission. The strong and independent truths which he has made heard in the country of the Medici will re-echo far away; and we hope that his work will be soon translated into French. In the meantime, we shall be allowed to make a last

¹ MARCHESE, vol. i., l. I., ch. 18.

² *Id.*, vol. i., l. II., ch. 5.

quotation, which will give an idea of our author's manner of looking on art. After sketching with masterly strokes, in the chapter serving as an introduction to the Life of Beato Angelico, the history of art in ancient and modern times, Padre Marchese shows that Christian art has varied its means according to times and nations, without changing for all that its invariable principles. The principles are these: "To have always for its aim, not to please, but to move and instruct; pleasure should be the means and not the end. The thought should be given with all simplicity and clearness. Accessories which would disturb the moral and religious effect of the subject, must be rejected. The artist ought to have full liberty in his work; he may use all the means he judges best to gain his end. All ought to speak to the soul and heart of the spectator, and where painting is not enough, he must resort to clear and easily understood symbols, and if symbols do not suffice he must aid himself by speech, and choose texts out of the Bible that give the artistic thought best, and put them in the most convenient place. In pictures exposed to the veneration of the faithful, he must portray the saints, not in their pilgrimage, but in heavenly light and glory; and in these representations, especially of Christ and of the Holy Virgin, he must guard well against giving portraits of living persons, for the portrait awakens in the mind of the spectator recollections of the original and of relations with him, and public devotion will certainly be only lost. Decency ought to be severely observed. Lastly, he must dread every immoral subject, and bear in mind that Christian art is a divine inspiration,

and that the images of the blessed and the holy joys of Paradise cannot be properly and worthily represented without a pure heart, lively faith, ardent charity and fervent prayer."

Germany is perhaps the country of Europe given up to the greatest conflicts between error and truth. Whilst Protestantism is attacking reason, both divine and human, by denying with Dr. Strauß the divinity of Christ and by falling with Hegel and his disciples into contradiction of terms, Catholicism is publishing admirable works, which it suffices to translate to refute all the false systems that French eclectics go to seek beyond the Rhine. Historical science in particular is on the advance in Germany. The study of the past is the great work of our age; its extent affrights. All peoples, all languages, all points of time and of space are interrogated with unheard-of ardour and perseverance. God seems to have given the order for uniting the testimonies of all ages together, to assure to the world a last and supreme manifestation of the truth.

This effort towards the True must naturally be a progress towards the Beautiful; and in fact we see Germany taking an immense stride towards Christian art. When the French Revolution and the conquests of the Empire had re-awakened the national spirit of the Germanic races, they found, in tracing back their origins, a literature and monuments, the inspiration of which was necessarily religious, for religion is the principal and sap of the people. In the study of their ancient poems, the architecture, sculpture and painting of the middle ages soon recovered favour. The brothers Sulpice and Melchior Boisseree made a

collection of old German masters, which attracted the attention of the public, and was purchased in 1817 by the King of Bavaria. The brothers Schlegel, in particular, aided very much in this national reaction against the academical and pagan school then reigning. By their writings and lectures, they became the guides of taste. In 1817, Augustus William Schlegel published, at Paris, a notice on Beato Angelico and his picture in the Museum of the Louvre: a very remarkable work for that time.¹ The author assigns to our painter "a distinguished rank amongst the restorers and promoters of art who went before the celebrated masters of the sixteenth century." After having given an abridgement of his life from Vasari's incomplete authorities, he examines and analyses with taste the principal subject and the gradino accompanying it. He praises the disposition, "which is," he says, "very well ordered, and the symmetry, which reminds the spectator that he is assisting at a solemn act; it unites richness and variety, which diffuse life. The painter has shown besides, in that part, a deep knowledge of lineal perspective. . . . If we then occupy ourselves with each figure in particular, we directly admire the imagination of the painter, who, in a subject wherein opposition of characters cannot properly find a place, and wherein it is necessary for the uniform expression of affectionate joy and calm happiness to be shown in every countenance, has known how to create so great a variety, whilst keeping himself within the limits of gravity and beauty. It cannot be said that

¹ *Le Couronnement de la sainte Vierge et les Miracles de saint Dominique*, in folio; 15 plates. Paris: 1817.

one single head is the repetition of another; and this variety is extended, not only to features and looks full of soul, but also to the cut and arrangement of the hair and beard, which is usually of uncommon beauty, and lastly to the movements and attitudes."

He praises, above all, the two principal figures. "The Virgin is kneeling upon the topmost step before the throne, a little bent forwards, her beautiful hands crossed on her bosom, which is but slightly marked. Nothing exceeds the elegance, the gracefulness of this almost unmaterial figure, and the virginal purity of her head. There is something paternal in the whole of our Lord's body, and it is difficult to imagine that he is the Son of her whom he is crowning. He holds the crown with both hands, in order to place it as gently as possible on a beloved head. The angels are figures of young persons full of amiable frankness and happy innocence; they touch the cords with a graceful negligence, as if harmony were their nature. The last one, who plays a sort of viol, and turns aside, has the air of one inebriated with joy and ravished with the sounds he is drawing from his instrument."

After having examined the other figures and the compositions representing the Life of S. Dominic, Schlegel resumes, and ends with an accommodation between the arts of the ancients and moderns, in which some useful truths are found.

"The work we are examining places us in a perfect condition for passing a general judgment on Giovanni of Fiesole, without the need of presenting any other ones. This artist shares the qualities and defects of his contemporaries. Through a respectful attachment

for the ancient manner, perhaps, he will be left, in some way, in the background, in regard to the skill in the effect of the painting, and to many other parts of the art. His principal qualities are sweetness, delicacy and gracefulness. . . . His talent is like a copious spring, which glides evenly along, without impetuosity and without restraint, from a lovely soul purified by piety and contemplation.

“The gracefulness of Giovanni of Fiesole has made Lanzi give him the name of the Guido of ancient painting. Lanzi, no doubt, wished thereby to pass a grand eulogy on Giovanni of Fiesole, and the admirers of Guido’s agreeable and superficial manner will perhaps find the comparison not very flattering to their favourite master; but whosoever seeks originality and depth in art will not regard it either as just or as satisfactory.

“Although gracefulness and sweetness particularly distinguish Giovanni of Fiesole, still these qualities are not generally foreign to the genius of the Florentine school. On this occasion, we will take up an assertion of Winkelman, who pretends that the Tuscan artists inherited a harsh, forced and over-done style from the ancient Etruscans. . . . The comparison is exceedingly defective, and all comparisons will be more or less so which anyone would desire to establish between the arts of the ancients and of the moderns; for not only do they differ, but they are even completely opposed in their intimate essence, and cannot, therefore, be submitted to a common measure. With the Greeks, art began with the imitation of the human form; with the moderns, it is attached, from the first, to express the affections

of the soul. In the works of the Greeks, the human body was already represented in all the perfection of its structure. All its movements, all the developments of physical power, had been imitated with the greatest vigour, before the soul was manifested on the countenance. Even the beauty of the heads, which consists in the proportions and regularity of the features independently of the expression, was discovered only very slowly with the Greeks, comparatively with the progress of art in all the rest. With the ancient Christian painters, on the contrary, the body is drawn in a very imperfect manner; it is added to the head, in some sort, as a necessary evil, whilst, in the variety of physiognomies, these artists already show gradations of feeling with an exquisite delicacy, and that they succeeded in painting what we may call the beauty of the soul. They took a more intellectual view of the world, and also had under their eyes quite another generation. By imitating the ancients only, have the moderns perfected themselves in drawing the body. It belongs to the history of art to show how difference of religion produced these opposite directions. The farther we go back towards the beginnings of art with the ancients and with the moderns, the more do we find it exclusively consecrated to worship, and fixed by religious ideas. With the progress of time, art always became more and more worldly, and there is properly its last epoch. In our days, they have sought to reanimate it by purely temporal resorts and with worldly views; but this means never can succeed. All science, all observation of real things, is insufficient to inspire talent with truly original creations. The

artist must be initiated into mysteries of a higher order; whether it be, as with the Greeks, in the sphere of the creatrix-powers of nature, or, as with the ancient Christian painters, in the spiritual kingdom of man regenerated by faith. Art, destined to show us a reflection of the divine perfections in the visible world, is a sublime want of man, but he will not know how to fulfil his end unless heaven and earth engage in the work."

In Prussia, an English amateur, Mr. Solly, formed a collection of the old Italian masters, and was guided in his searches by the learned M. Hirt. This collection was sold to the king in 1820, and began the Museum of Berlin. These pictures, purer in style than those of the ancient schools of Germany, aided the return towards Christian art. The government favoured this movement by the mission which it entrusted to the learned Rumohr, and to the two brothers Tieck, poets and sculptors. Rumohr explored Italy without following the beaten paths; he studied the artists in their works, lives, and mutual relations, rummaged archives, rectified Vasari, and threw great light on the history of the primitive schools. M. Rio renders justice to the value of his work, which was often serviceable to him in his researches. Rumohr naturally gives an honourable place to Beato Angelico, and we regret that we cannot give here the translation of the pages which he dedicates to him.¹

The happiest event for the Renaissance of Christian art in Germany has been the school founded at Rome

¹ RUMOHR, *Italienische Forschungen*, vol. ii., p. 251.

by Frederick Overbeck. The date of this new era is 1809. The young Protestant of Lubeck was obliged to fly from Vienna before the intolerance and sarcasms of the partisans of Raphael Mengs and David. His Christian and national ideas clashed with the academical routine, and he went to seek at Rome a freer air and purer doctrines. Whilst studying beauty he found truth; he recognized the faith of his forefathers in the paintings of the catacombs and of the basilicas. Overbeck became a Catholic, and God fixed him in the eternal city, there to win back the traditions of Christian art, and to give to all the artists who went there the great instruction of his life and works.

The whole world knows the touching history of the new German school, its humble and courageous beginnings, the struggle of a few young people against privations of every kind, the rare friendship which shared both toils and crowns. From the poor convent which gave them an asylum has gone forth the generation of artists that now covers Germany. Rationalism, without doubt, finds some partisans there; but Catholicism is ever truly the inspirer of the progress and the master of the work. We cannot here appreciate the character of the German school, and say how beautiful it is in its whole, how happy in its independence. We will only long to see our own French school follow a like path, and repeat the beautiful words of M. Hallez, in his letter to M. Claudius Lavergne, on the subject of the universal exposition of 1855. "What we have to do, is to study with brotherly sympathy what our elders have done in the career, and to support them. Christians of different nations, that is to say, dif-

ferent companies of the same army, let us endeavour, in good time, to outstrip one another; but let us never forget that the victory of the one is the victory of all.”¹

We regret that we cannot do homage here to the German schools, particularly to that of Duffeldorf, which is rendering, through its Society, so great services for the propagation of religious prints;² but we hail them all in the person of Frederick Overbeck, their chief, the most worthy successor of Beato Angelico. During our last stay at Rome, one of our devotions on the Sunday was to visit his studio, where he received everyone with so touching a simplicity; and we own that no preacher has made us understand virtue better and love it more. His words shed a heavenly brightness over his works, whether he was explaining his picture, in which Mary, Queen of the arts, sings her everlasting *Magnificat* amidst the angels, or was making admirable homilies whilst explaining his beautiful compositions of the Sacraments: and when he humbly shunned our hearty homage, we asked God to delay his reward still longer and to give him many imitators.

Catholic France could not remain a stranger to the

¹ *Exposition universelle de 1855: BEAUX ARTS*, par Claudius Lavergne; Paris, Ve Pouffielgue, page 124.

² The Society of Duffeldorf is represented at Paris by the house of A. W. Schulgen, Rue St. Sulpice, No. 25. From the catalogue of this house, M. Bathil Bouniol has written an excellent pamphlet on Christian art and the German school.

[In England, too, the Society of Duffeldorf is represented by an establishment, which is not a simple agency, but also energetically co-operates in the great work of the German association. This is “THE ESTABLISHMENT FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN ART” of Mr. John Philp, 7, Orchard Street, Portman Square, London, W.—TRANSLATOR’S Note.]

Renaissance of Christian art, and Overbeck's little colony at Rome found ardent sympathy in some French artists. Orfel especially was worthy to stretch out a brotherly hand to him; for he too was there, far from noise and favour, dreaming and preparing a better future for his country. He is scarcely dead, and glory has placed a very tardy crown upon his brow; but his example will live, and his tomb will be one of the solid bases of the new temple art must raise to the Creator in France. There is an eloquent instruction in that laborious and disinterested life, in those persevering efforts and progresses, in that generous sacrifice of his years and fortune, amidst an age when talent even is only prized by what it brings in. There is a great example, too, in the touching friendship which united Orfel with M. Perrin, his other self, whose eulogy is inseparable from his. The holy brotherhood so common in Germany is very rare in France; yet it would be worth more than the gay companionship of our artisans. Amongst us, Christian artists would need to be united for struggling against the difficulties of their position; and what we wish most for our country is a religious association, having a centre and unity of action by instruction. The State gives only an incomplete artistic education, and encouragements which lead young persons astray in the routine. In the midst of the gross life of our artisans, what can they learn who feel a vocation for the fine arts? Their intellect is deprived of all culture, and their heart soon loses all moral feeling. This is to pay dear indeed for some procedures in colouring and drawing.

A religious association may also protect Christian artists by its connection with the clergy. It would defend them against the injustices of cabal, against the omnipotence of administrations, and particularly against that lying criticism which makes reputations and distributes orders. Criticism of works of art is one which requires the most special knowledge and varied studies, and yet all the world thinks itself capable of writing on this subject. It is the theme chosen by all our literary beginners. But what do we mostly have? Pamphleteers who repeat, in the jargon of the artizan, the common-places and prejudices of the history of art.¹

The serious study of the history of art will be very serviceable for the revival of Christian art. Catholicism desires only the truth, and monuments are witnesses from which it has nothing to fear; for let them be proofs of greatness or of decay, all must turn to its glory. Since Montfaucon until our own days, archæology has done immense work. Its learned analysis has classified and catalogued all the ruins of past ages; but history must now, by synthesis, make their origin and laws known, and find therein useful lessons for the future.

France has gone before Germany in this justice rendered to the middle ages. Seroux d'Agincourt be-

¹ There are, without doubt, some happy exceptions, and we place at the head of these exceptions the articles on art published by M. Claudius Lavergne in the *Annales Archéologiques* and in the *Univers*. We do not know a juster, firmer and more Christian critic. For depth as well as for form, his account of the Exposition of 1855 is a model. Would that artists thus raised their pen to the height of their talent, and did not submit to the shameful slavery of all those frivolous and lying babblers!

longed to the last century (1730-1814). His *Histoire de l'art sur les Monuments* is very remarkable for the period at which it appeared. We have always revolted against scorn for authors whose knowledge the natural progress of science has outstripped. Why not, on the contrary, honour their memory? Their merit ought to be measured by services rendered; if our fortune has been increased, is it a reason for despising those who left it to us? Must not that young gentleman be admired who was smitten with mediæval art in the midst of the frivolities and debaucheries of Louis XV's reign, and pursued his studies throughout the bloody horrors of the French Revolution, spending life and fortune in researches and travels? D'Agincourt ruined himself in publishing his work. His plates are engraved as they then engraved; but, in spite of their imperfections, they present an unique whole of monuments. As for ourselves, we declare that we prefer D'Agincourt to Winkelman, that fanatical antiquary, who never had the true knowledge of art, and in his factitious enthusiasm exalted himself in such a manner that it was impossible for him to support the sky and scenery of his own country. He died whilst returning to his Italian collections, the victim of his passion for medals.

D'Agincourt has some very remarkable and bold perceptions for the time in which he lived. He recognized the influence of Catholicism on the arts, and the service rendered them by popes and religious orders. He presents the reign of Nicholas V. as the preparation for those of Julius II. and Leo X. He has particularly studied Beato Angelico in the chapel of the Vatican,

and renders full justice to our painter. He is perhaps the first who praised him in France.

After having said that he was distinguished in miniature-painting, he adds: "Fra Giovanni of Fiesole showed himself able to execute great compositions in fresco, and in this manner he adorned the church of his convent at Florence, and amongst many others, that of San Marco, which he painted by order of Cosimo de Medici called the Father of his country. His paintings are admired even at this day, and serve always for the edification of the Faithful, by the truthfulness of the attitudes, by the sweetness and liveliness of the expression, and particularly on account of the beautiful heads of angels and saints. The noble character agreeing with these figures is so well rendered, that according to Vasari's words, *non possono essere altrimenti in cielo*. This beauty earned for the author the title of *Angelico*, which he, moreover, merited for his virtues.

"Pope Nicholas V., who cherished men of talent, called him about him from the earliest years of his pontificate, and charged him to paint his private chapel in the palace of the Vatican.

"The ability with which these frescoes have been finished is truly prodigious: nothing is sweeter to the eye than the colouring of them; little of deep shades, an harmonious chiar-oscuro. Near, these pictures have all charms of miniature; at a distance, they produce, by the vigour of the tints, all the effects of a broad and free pencil.

"His drawing does not want correction. Nevertheless his figures are short, which might have happened from a habit contracted in the miniatures of

books, or from the obligation of painting on the contracted borders, and on the transverse strip at the bottom of the pictures called the *predella*, where it was usual to treat subjects and little *istoriette*. The modest attitudes, the air of attention and expression of piety which seem to animate the personages, have something touching, for we see there the imitation of nature. In these works there is another very remarkable peculiarity, which likewise springs from the attention of the artist to give all the circumstances of the subject faithfully, and it is that the disposing, wise in this regard, shows it without uncertainty. The religious artist certainly owed the justness of the expression to the sense of his own virtues, and to the models which his pious brethren daily afforded him; and he drew the talent to seize these beauties from the school, which, for more than a century, sought perfection by attaching itself to the simple truth." No one could better judge and more highly praise the great school of Giotto.

The work of M. Rio on Christian painting in Italy, has been one of the happiest events for the regeneration of art in France, and whilst recalling here the eulogies which have welcomed and the success that has crowned it, we love to pay our debt of gratitude to our author. Our first studies in art were wholly directed towards the antique;¹ but afterwards, whilst

¹ Let us be allowed to pay homage here to the memory of our good master and friend, M. Paulin Guérin. For all who seriously study the history of art in France, his picture of Cain cursed will be a glorious date. Diverted from his natural method by the course of the school of David, and detained by an interested direction in a secondary rank, M. Paulin Guérin escaped from the studio of Gerard, to take in the Bible, our history for all, a religious subject outside the antique and

visiting the monuments of the middle ages, the galleries of the catacombs and the mosaics of the Roman basilicas, art appeared to us intimately knitted with our faith, and we sought to know its true principles. The work of M. Rio then offered itself to us as a friend, and served to guide us in our new impressions. To how many others has it not rendered the same service! We have not to praise it, after the justice done it by Comte de Montalembert;¹ but we cannot help regretting that M. Rio has not carried out the magnificent plan, of which he has let us have a glimpse. The beautiful fragments he has published show us that he has all the qualifications for doing it. To the deep faith of a fervent Catholic, he unites the accomplishments of the happiest writer, and to very extensive knowledge of history, joins a clearness of statement, a liveliness of expression, a soberness of style and a purity of imagery, which charm at once the mind and heart. Why may we not still hope? Some years would suffice for M. Rio to write the æsthetic Sum of Christian art.

M. Rio promises us a new edition of the first volume of his work. We are desirous that he soften his severity in regard to the Byzantine school, and that he carry back to the Siennese school his predilection for that of Perugino, one much less Christian and less mystical, in our opinion, than the schools of Giotto and Simone Memmi. We hope also that he will give

mythology. This picture was admired by all Europe. In his last years, M. Paulin Guérin did not enjoy public favour, but there are sometimes conditions for obtaining it that render oblivion glorious. What do the crowns of men signify to him now? We know what joy he had to receive the one which awaited him in heaven.

¹ *Université catholique*, Août 1837.

a still more glorious place to Beato Angelico, whose artistic merit he does not perhaps sufficiently appreciate. Beato Angelico is not only a saint, he is a great painter too; and the faults he reproaches him with must be now attributed to his brother Fra Benedetto.

Here is the fine encomium passed by M. Rio on our painter.

“A very remarkable fact in the history of this incomparable artist, is the influence he exercised over his biographer Vasari, who lived in an age when enthusiasm for mystical paintings was very much enfeebled, and who, nevertheless, in his account of those of Beato Angelico, seems to have been disengaged from all the prejudices of his time, to celebrate, with the accent of admiration, the most sensible and sublime virtues embellishing his soul, and the numberless marvels issuing from his pencil. In the fervour of his momentary conversion, he has gone as far as to say, that so superior and so extraordinary a talent as Beato Angelico's can and must have been only the inheritance of the highest sanctity, and that, to succeed well in the representation of religious and holy subjects, the artist must be religious and holy himself.

“This superiority, to which Vasari pays so fine a tribute, does not consist, nevertheless, in the perfection of the drawing, nor in the relief of the figures, or in the truthfulness of the details: pictorial order is never maintained by a clever distribution of shades and lights, as in the frescoes of Massaccio; and what must appear still more offensive to certain observers, the life superabounding in the heads and sufficient in the upper parts of the body, becomes weakened in the

lower members, so far as to give them the stiffness of artificial supports. But they must need be very inaccessible to all the most delicate emotions to which Christian art can give rise in a soul properly prepared, to take up minutely all the technical imperfections in the productions of this truly divine pencil, imperfections which, besides, are a matter far less of inability of execution in the artist, than of his indifference for everything foreign to the transcendental aim of his pious imagination.

“Compunction of heart, ejaculations to God, ecstatic rapture, foretaste of heavenly beatitude, all that order of profound and exalted emotions which no artist can render without having first proved them, were as the mysterious cycle through which the genius of Beato Angelico was pleased to travel, and when he had finished it he began it again with the same love. In this kind, he seems to have exhausted all combinations and shadings, at least relatively to the quality and quantity of expression; and if we ever so little examine certain pictures closely, where a fatiguing monotony seems to reign, we shall discover a prodigious variety embracing all the degrees of poetry which can express the human physiognomy. It is particularly in the Crowning of the Blessed Virgin amidst angels and the heavenly hierarchy, in the representation of the Last Judgment at least in what concerns the elect, and in that of Paradise, the highest limits of all the art of imitation: it is in these mystical subjects so perfectly in harmony with the vague but infallible foresight of our soul, that he has displayed with profusion the inexhaustible riches of his imagination. We may say of

him, that painting was nothing else but his favourite set-form for acts of faith, hope and charity.”¹

What Count de Montalembert has done for Christian art is not one of his least titles to glory. The illustrious defender of religious liberty in France must serve beauty as well as truth with all the power of his talent. His *Histoire de S. Elizabeth* is a masterpiece which has caused mediæval art to be better understood and more loved than the most learned archæological dissertations have done. In making his *dear Saint* live again in those pages so full of poetry and piety, Count de Montalembert has given to artists a sweet patroness who may lead them across the fields of the past, even into the presence of God Himself. S. Elizabeth has well rewarded her noble historian; she has armed him as a chevalier for the defence of Christian art, and no one has forgotten the brilliant victories over vandalism brought back by him at the tribune and in the press. To him, how many monuments owe their preservation, and truths their glorification!

Beato Angelico is the beloved painter of Count de Montalembert. He has placed him again in his rank, in his examination of M. Rio's work, and he has devoted a special article to him in the introduction to the monuments of the *Histoire de S. Elizabeth*. We have already quoted the fine description he has given of the Last Judgment in the Academy of the Fine Arts at Florence; let us be allowed to give again some pages of the Count de Montalembert: it will be the last and most beautiful crown we can offer to the memory of the painter whose Life we have written.

¹ *De l' Art chrétien*, vol. I., p. 191.

After having spoken of the monks who painted manuscripts, Montalembert adds :

“ All these painter-monks were forerunners of him whom we do not hesitate to call the greatest, as he was the holiest, of Christian painters, the Blessed Fra Giovanni of Fiesole, surnamed *Angelico*, on account of his angelic piety, and at this day still called at Florence eminently, *il Beato*. This incomparable artist, who hardly begins to be known by name in France, although we have one of his masterpieces, triumphed even over the classical prejudices and repugnances of Vasari, and finds a worthy and eloquent panegyrist in M. Rio. It was he who set himself in prayer, every day, before he began to paint, for he laboured only to express his faith, hope and love to God ; it was he who shed warm tears every time he had to paint a Crucifixion, so greatly did he suffer with his Saviour dead to redeem him. Every Catholic should experience an unspeakable happiness in contemplating his marvellous works, wherein God permitted the perfection of the expression to answer to the holiness of the intention, and which are, we may boldly say, the *ne plus ultra* of Christian art. What proves it better than all, is the feeling of piety and compunction which straightway seize everyone at the sight of our Beato's pictures. We acknowledge religion with all its power, which speaks to us under the veil of the purest beauty.”¹

Montalembert thus begins his notice on the Blessed Fra Angelico of Fiesole.²

“ The name of the monk Giovanni of Fiesole, a

¹ *Du Vandalisme et du Catholicisme dans l'art*, p. 96.

² *Id.* p. 245.

painter of the Catholic school of Florence (Fra Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole), surnamed the Angelic, and in Italy commonly called Il Beato, is scarcely found in any of the works treating on art during the last three centuries. But we cannot be astonished nor complain of it. His glory who has reached the ideal of Christian art deserves not be confounded with that decreed to such artists as Giulio Romano, Dominichino, the Carracci, and others of that class: it was much better for him to be totally forgotten than to be placed in the same line with them. A short time after his death, paganism broke in upon all branches of Christian society: in politics, by the establishment of absolute monarchies; in literature, by the exclusive study of the classical authors; in art, by the cultivation of mythology, of nudity, and of the naturalism characterizing the epoch of the Renaissance. Having rapidly become conqueror and master, it took care to discredit men and things that bore the ineffable impression of Christian genius. Beato Angelico had the honour of being mixed up in the proscription, which enveloped at once the social constitutions of the middle ages and the pious and chivalrous poetry that had so long charmed Europe, and lastly the art so gloriously and happily inspired by the mysteries and traditions of the Catholic faith. That was all declared *barbarous*, and deserving of oblivion and contempt; and conformably with the decree of the masters, they have been forgotten and despised for three centuries. Now that the human mind, arrived, perhaps, at the limits of its long wanderings, stops uncertain, and seems to cast a look of envy and admiration towards Catholic ages, we

begin again the study of the art, which was so completely the set-off of that epoch, and the beatified painter has resumed, by degrees, the place assigned him by the judgment of his contemporaries. Still strangely unknown in Italy, he is admired with enthusiasm in Germany; and France, possessed of one of his masterpieces, becomes accustomed, in its turn, to see him always counted amongst the great masters."

May our efforts, too, have contributed to make known, loved and imitated Beato Fra Angelico of Fiesole, the model of Christian artists!

CATALOGUE OF THE WORKS OF

BEATO ANGELICO

DA FIESOLE.



E have not neglected anything for making this catalogue as complete as possible. Still if any other pictures and drawings by Beato Angelico exist, we beg that they may be made known to us. All communications will reach us safely through the medium of our Publisher.

We have followed a geographical order, so as to render this catalogue convenient for travellers ; and when we have deemed it useful, we have added some notes on the execution, preservation, dimensions and history of each picture. We have pointed out those which, it seems to us, ought to be attributed to Fra Benedetto ; and have marked (?) such as we have not seen, or are, to us, of dubious authenticity.

Lastly, we have indicated authors who have spoken of them, and engravings of them. These engravings may certainly give some idea of the pictures ; but Beato Angelico is an untranslatable painter : to render him, it is necessary to have his soul and the flexible and fine graver of Lucas van Leyden.

PERUGIA.

Church of S. Domenico.—Chapel of S. Orsola.

- I.—1. A Madonna with the Child Jesus. On the accessory shutters :
2. S. John Baptist, and S. Catherine Virgin and Martyr.

3. S. Dominic and S. Nicholas of Bari.—See page 56. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 214.

Sacristsy of the Convent.

II.—Twelve small pictures, which served as a frame for the preceding picture. The first eight are twelve inches in height; the other four only eight inches.

1. S. Peter Martyr. 2. S. Jerome. 3. S. Benedict. 4. A Bishop-faint. 5. S. Mary Magdalen. 6. S. Thomas Aquinas. 7. S. Lawrence Martyr. 8. S. Catherine of Sienna, or Blessed Villana. 9. S. Peter Apostle. 10. S. Agatha holding the pincers. 11. S. Paul Apostle. 12. A Prophet. 13. A compartment of the gradino which represented the legend of S. Nicholas. The other two are in the Gallery of the Vatican. 14. The B. Virgin and the angel Gabriel, in two panels which probably served as a crown for the same altarpiece.—This altarpiece was made for the chapel of S. Niccolo dei Guidalotti. Padre Bottonio says that it was executed at Florence in 1437; to us, it seems older. At the time of the French invasion of Italy, it was carried away to Paris, but it was restored at the general peace.

CORTONA.

Church of S. Domenico

III.—At the entrance-door of the façade, in the tympan, a Madonna and the Child Jesus holding a globe, with S. Dominic and S. Peter Martyr. A mural painting damaged. On the arch, the four Evangelists better preserved. In the second edition of his work, Padre Marchese thinks that this painting is later than the date he at first assigned to it, because a bull of Eugenius IV., Feb. 13th, 1438, grants to the prior of the convent of S. Domenico at Cortona faculty to commute vows of pilgrimages and of holy images (*del far dipingere sacre immagini*) into alms for the construction and building of his church (*pro constructione et fabbrica*). These words may be applied to the completion of the church.—See page 60. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 218.

IV.—In the church, on the right of the high altar, a Madonna and the Child Jesus surrounded with angels. In the compartments, S. John and

S. Mary Magdalen. This picture is in the form of a pointed triptich. In the two accessory compartments, on the right, S. John and S. Mary Magdalen, S. John Baptist and S. Mark. In the angle of the crowning, in the centre, Jesus on the Cross with the B. Virgin and S. John Evangelist; and on each side, the B. Virgin and the angel of the Annunciation.

In the church of the Gesù, near the Cathedral.

V.—Legend of S. Dominic. It formed the gradino to the preceding picture.

1. Vision of pope Innocent III. 2. Kiss of S. Dominic and S. Francis. 3. Apparition of S. Peter and S. Paul. 4. Resurrection of the young Napoleon. 5. Ordeal of the book. 6. The angels serving the Dominicans in the refectory. 7. Death of S. Dominic.

These subjects are framed and separated by four figures: S. Peter Martyr, S. Michael, S. Vincent Deacon and Martyr, S. Thomas Aquinas.

VI.—Great Annunciation. In a corner of the composition, are seen Adam and Eve driven out of the earthly paradise.—Page 63. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 222.

VII.—Legend of the B. Virgin.

Gradino of the preceding picture:

1. Birth of the B. Virgin. 2. Marriage of the B. Virgin. 3. Visitation. 4. Adoration of the Magi. 5. Presentation. 6. Burial. 7. The B. Virgin gives the habit of his Order to Blessed Reginald of Orleans.

FIESOLE.

Church of S. Domenico.

VIII.—Behind the high altar, the Madonna on a throne surrounded with angels and saints: S. Peter Apostle, S. Thomas Aquinas, S. Dominic and S. Peter Martyr. (This picture was restored by Lorenzo di Credi in 1501.) At the bottom, is a copy of the gradino actually at Rome representing our Lord triumphant amidst angels and saints.—Page 77. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 228.

IX.—In the old refectory, now private property, our Lord on the Cross, accompanied by the B. Virgin and S. John Evangelist. A mural painting damaged.

X.—In the old strangers' hospice, and now at the top of a staircase in a neighbouring dwelling, the B. Virgin and the Child Jesus, accompanied by S. Dominic and S. Thomas Aquinas. This painting appears retouched by Lorenzo di Credi.

Church of S. Geronimo.

XI.—The B. Virgin, S. Jerome and other saints (?). A painting which may have been by Fra Benedetto. Restored.

FLORENCE.

Convent of S. Marco.

The paintings at the convent of San Marco have been published in the fine work, entitled, *S. Marco, Convento dei Padri Prædicatori; Firenze, 1852*. The text is Padre Marchese's, and includes the Life of Beato Angelico and the history of the convent. The engravings were executed by the Artistic Society, under the direction of Professor Perfetti. They are unquestionably the best engravings after Beato Angelico. In England, this work is to be had at Mr. John Philp's Establishment for Promoting Christian Fine Arts, 7, Orchard Street, Portman Square, W.

In indicating the pictures at S. Marco's, we follow the order of our text, ch. xi., p. 204; we will give only the number of the engraved plate.

In the first cloister, called the cloister of S. Antoninus :

XII.—Our Lord on the Cross and S. Dominic at his feet. Pl. xxxvii.

XIII.—Above the door of the sacristy, S. Peter Martyr. Pl. ii.

XIV.—Above the door of the chapter, S. Dominic holding the Book of the Rule and a discipline.

XV.—At the end, going to the right, a *Pietà*. Pl. iii.

XVI.—Above the door of the strangers' hospice, our Lord as a pilgrim received by two Friar-preachers. Pl. xxxii.

XVII.—Same side, S. Thomas Aquinas. Very much injured.

XVIII.—Chapter-room. A great mural painting, twenty-six feet six inches in breadth by twenty-three feet in height. (We do not guarantee the exactness of these numbers.) It represents our Lord on the Cross, with the B. Virgin, the founders of orders, and the protectors

of the convent. We attribute the figure of S. Mark to Fra Benedetto. In the border of the frame are figures of prophets holding texts.

XIX.—At the base, in the foliage of a tree springing from S. Dominic, the faints and blessed of his Order. The names of them have been changed since Beato Angelico's time.

The background of all this picture has been unhappily injured. The figures are well preserved. Pl. v.

This composition has been brought out in colours in *Moyen Age et Renaissance*, after a drawing by M. Victor Gay, architect. The beautiful head of S. Bernard was copied for Count de Montalembert, by M. Claudius Lavergne. Many small engravings have been made from this copy.

XX.—In the upper corridor of the cells, an Annunciation. Pl. x.

XXI.—In the cells, another Annunciation. Pl. xi.

XXII.—Nativity of our Lord. Pl. xii. By Fra Benedetto (?)

XXIII.—Presentation in the Temple. Pl. xiv.

XXIV.—Adoration of the Magi. In the cell of Cosimo de Medici. Pl. xiii.

XXV.—Baptism of our Lord. Pl. xv. By Fra Benedetto.

XXVI.—In two cells removed so as to open the door into the library the Temptation in the Wilderness and the Entering into Jerusalem. There remains but little of them. The figure of our Lord praying in the Desert. Pl. xvi.

XXVII.—Sermon on the Mount. Pl. xvii. (Fra Benedetto.)

XXVIII.—Transfiguration. Pl. xviii. This picture has been published in colours by Curmer, in the first part of the *Convent de Saint Marc*, by Henri de Laborde. (This publication has not been continued.)

XXIX.—Institution of the holy Eucharist. Pl. xix. (Fra Benedetto.)

XXX.—Prayer in the Garden of Olives.—Pl. xx.

XXXI.—Treason of Judas. Pl. xxi. Fra Benedetto (?)

XXXII.—Jesus in the Prætorium. Pl. xxii.

XXXIII.—Christ bearing his Cross. Pl. xxiii.

XXXIV.—The Crucifixion. Pl. xxiv.

XXXV.—Christ on the Cross. Pl. xxvi. (Fra Benedetto.)

XXXVI.—Longinus piercing the side of our Lord. Pl. xxv.

XXXVII.—Burial of our Lord. Pl. xxviii. (Fra Benedetto.)

XXXVIII.—Descent into Hell. Cell of S. Antoninus. Pl. xxix. (Fra Benedetto.)

XXXIX.—The Holy Women at the Tomb. Pl. xxx.

XL.—*Noli me tangere*. Pl. xxxi.

XLI.—Our Lord on the Cross, surrounded by the B. Virgin, S. John, S. Dominic and S. Jerome. Pl. iv.

XLII.—Crowning of the B. Virgin. Pl. xxxiii. This painting has been published by Curmer, after M. Henri de Laborde.

XLIII.—Madonna and her Son, with S. Augustine and S. Thomas Aquinas.

XLIV.—On the wall of the corridor, Madonna, having on her right, S. Mark, SS. Cosmas and Damian and S. Dominic, and on her left, S. Paul, S. Thomas Aquinas, S. Lawrence and S. Peter Martyr. In the cells occupied by the students, are many Crucifixions, which approach the style of Beato Angelico, but cannot be attributed to him.

XLV.—The convent of S. Marco possesses the choir-books executed by Fra Benedetto; and his brother, Beato Angelico, may have painted some of the miniatures, but we do not know what may be attributed to him with certainty. These are the principal subjects of his miniatures.

Volume A. 1. Vocation of S. Peter. 2. Martyrdom of S. Stephen. 3. S. John Evangelist. 4. Massacre of the Innocents. 5. S. Agnes, engraved pl. vi.

6. Conversion of S. Paul. 7. Presentation. 8. Annunciation. 9. Jesus in the midst of the apostles. 10. Apparition of our Lord to a female saint. 11. Christ blessing martyrs. 12. Christ before a bishop. 13. Virgins singing, engraved pl. viii.

14. Our Lord on the Cross, perhaps by Beato Angelico.

Volume B. 15. Annunciation. 16. S. Peter Martyr receiving three crowns. 17. S. Peter opening Heaven. 18. S. Mary Magdalen carried to Heaven. 19. S. Dominic receiving his mission from SS. Peter and Paul. 20. Assumption. 21. Birth of the B. Virgin. 22. S. Michael. 23. All-Saints. 24. Jesus in the midst of the apostles. 25. Jesus putting his hand upon the head of a martyr. 26. Christ blessing two martyrs. 27. Christ giving back a cross to a bishop. 28. Virgin singing. 29. Christ blessing virgins, engraved pl. vii.

Volume G. 30. A saint reading in a garden. 31. An angel holding three flowers.

Antiph. A. 32. Christ carrying a book. 33. Nativity. Page 272. V. MARCHESI, t. 1, p. 164.

The painting by Beato Angelico in the refectory of S. Marco, has

been destroyed, others have been covered with whitewash. It would seem that some are to be restored.

Academy of Fine Arts ; Gallery of large pictures.

XLVI.—Descent from the Cross, No. 14 in the catalogue. A picture from the sacristy of Santa Trinità, Florence, cited by Vasari. Height, five feet five inches ; breadth, six feet eight inches. See page 160. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 273. This picture has been engraved in the Convent of S. Marco, pl. xxvii.

XLVII.—The frame is formed of sixteen small pictures by Beato Angelico.

On the left of the spectator : S. Benedict with the rod of his rule. 2. S. Lawrence. 3. Head with a capuce (?) 4. S. John Baptist. 5. S. Bernardine. 6. S. Andrew. 7. S. Francis. 8. S. Michael.

On the right : 1. S. Jerome. 2. S. Augustine (?). 3. A faint holding a staff (?). 4. S. Stephen. 5. S. Dominic. 6. S. Paul. 7. S. Peter Martyr. 8. S. Peter Apostle. Six of these figures have been engraved in the fine publication of M. Peretti, *Galleria dell' i. e Reale accademia delle Belle Arti di Firenze* ; 1847 : these are, S. Andrew and S. Paul, S. Michael and S. Peter, S. Dominic and S. Bernardine.

The three pictures of the Crowning, the *Noli me tangere*, the Resurrection and the Holy Women at the Tomb, are attributed to Lorenzo Monaco.

Gallery of small pictures.

XLVIII.—Life of our Lord. This great poem, ordered by Cosimo de Medici, is divided into eight panels and thirty-five compartments. We cannot give an account how these panels were arranged, when they formed part of a press in the chapel of the Nunciata. The Life of our Lord has been entirely engraved by Giov. Bat. Nocchi, *La Vita di Gesù Cristo, dipinta da Fra Giovanni da Fiesole*, engr. in folio ; Florence, 1843. These engravings are not without merit, particularly as they are executed on chalks of the originals. They are preceded by the Life of Beato Angelico by Vasari, and by a remarkable preface by P. Tanzini.

We go on to enumerate the subjects, whilst pointing out those which we do not think were executed by Beato Angelico.

1. The Vision of Ezechiel.
2. The Annunciation.
3. The Nativity.
4. The Circumcision.
5. The Adoration of the Magi.
6. The Presentation in the Temple.
7. The Flight into Egypt.
8. The Massacre of the Innocents.
9. Jesus amongst the Doctors.
10. The Baptism of our Lord.
11. The Marriage at Cana.
12. The Transfiguration.

These last three subjects united together in one panel, do not appear to me to be painted even by Fra Benedetto, so feeble are they in style and execution.

13. The Resurrection of Lazarus. (Fra Benedetto.)
14. The triumphal Entry into Jerufalem. (Fra Benedetto.)
15. The Bargain of Judas.
16. The Last Supper. (Fra Benedetto.)
17. The Washing of the feet. Fra Benedetto (?).
18. The Eucharist. (Fra Benedetto.)
19. The Prayer in the Garden of Olives.
20. The Kiss of Judas. Fra Benedetto (?).
21. Arrest of our Lord.
22. Our Lord mocked.
23. Christ before Pilate.
24. The Scourging.
25. Jesus carrying his Cross.
26. Jesus stripped of his garments.
27. Jesus on the Cross.
28. Burial. (Fra Benedetto.)
29. Descent into Hell. (Fra Benedetto.)
30. The Holy Women at the Tomb. Fra Benedetto (?)
31. The Ascension. (Fra Benedetto.)
32. Pentecost.
33. The Communion of Saints.
34. The Law of Love. (Fra Benedetto.)
35. The Last Judgment.

Numbers 1, 5, 7, 13-15-19, 24-28, have been engraved in the *Galleria dell' i. e reale accademia delle Belle Arte*.

The *Gallery of small paintings* also contains other works by Beato Angelico.

XLIX. Burial of our Lord, No. 4 in the catalogue. This picture was made for the confraternity of the Cross of the Temple. Cited by Vasari.—See page 165. V. MARCHESI, t. 1, p. 239.

L. The Last Judgment. (No. 18.) Executed for the monastery of the Angels at Florence. The upper part is by Beato Angelico, the lower part by Fra Benedetto. Cited by Vasari.—See page 150. V. MARCHESI, t. 1, p. 279.

The upper part has been engraved in outline, in Rosini's work, *Storia della Pittura*. Pl. xxxvi.

A fragment of the lower part, side of the elect, has been lithographed at Florence; but this is not on sale.

LI.—Two fragments of the legend of SS. Cosmas and Damian. Nos. 13, 22 (?).

LII.—Picture in two parts. *Pietà* and Adoration of the Magi (No. 27.)

LIII.—Madonna and the Child Jesus. Above, the Holy Trinity. (No. 31.)

LIV.—S. Thomas Aquinas teaching theology. (No. 46.)

LV.—Albert the Great teaching the natural sciences. (No. 53.)

These two wainscot panels, from the convent of S. Marco, may be copies of Beato Angelico, or paintings by Fra Benedetto.

LVI.—Crucifixion. (No. 47.) Crowning of the B. Virgin. (No. 54.) After Beato Angelico (?).

LVII.—The Legend of SS. Cosmas and Damian. (No. 51.)

A gradino of the altar of the chapel of S. Luca, in the cloister of the Annunciation at Florence. Six subjects. 1. The saints refusing money. 2. SS. Cosmas and Damian before the judge. 3. The two saints cast into the sea. 4. They are condemned, without avail, to the flames. 5. They are fastened on a cross, the arrows aimed at them rebound on the executioners. 6. They are beheaded.

Exposition Room.

LVIII.—Madonna with the Child Jesus, between two angels.

(No. 13.) On one side, S. Peter Martyr, SS. Cosmas and Damian; on the other, S. Francis, S. Anthony, S. Augustine (?).

The gradino, not so well preserved, represents a *Pietà*, S. Dominic, S. Peter, S. Paul, S. Bernardine, S. Benedict, S. Peter Martyr. This picture came from the convent called *il Bosco à Fratri*, in the province of Mugello.

LIX.—Madonna with the Child Jesus surrounded with angels. (No. 16.) SS. Cosmas and Damian kneeling before the throne. On the left, S. Dominic, S. Francis, S. Peter Martyr; on the right, S. Mark, S. John Evangelist, and S. Stephen.

This picture came from the church of S. Marco. Cited by Vafari.—See p. 166. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 247.

LX.—Madonna with the Child Jesus, S. Dominic, S. Francis, SS. Cosmas and Damian, S. John Evangelist and S. Lawrence.

This picture came from the monastery of *Annalena* at Florence.

Gallery at Florence, called degli Uffizi.

LXI.—Corridor on entering. Altarpiece with shutters, executed, in 1433, for the Guild of Joiners. Madonna holding the Child Jesus. In the breadth of the frame, twelve figures of angels playing on various instruments. On the shutters, inside, S. John Baptist and S. Mark; outside, S. Peter and S. Mark. Cited by Vafari.—See page 167. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 235.

Catalogue of the Gallery, 18th edit., page 55.

Height, four feet ten inches; breadth, two feet one inch.

LXII.—Gradino of the preceding picture, in three subjects: Adoration of the Magi; Preaching of S. Peter; Martyrdom of S. Mark.

LXIII.—*Tuscan school*.—Crowning of the B. Virgin.

This beautiful picture has been engraved by Domenico Choffione, at Florence. A good copy, by Antoine Saffo, was brought out at Paris in 1855. (Catalogue, page 234.)—See page 169. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 237.

LXIV.—Nativity of S. John Baptist.

LXV.—Marriage of the B. Virgin. Engraved in outline, in Rosini's work, *Storia del Pitt.* Pl. xxxiii.

LXVI.—Death of the B. Virgin.

In the collection of original drawings, in the same gallery, are the

following drawings attributed to Beato Angelico. (V. MARCHESE, t. I, p. 278.)

LXVII.—1st drawer. 2nd Cartoon. The four evangelists and two doctors of the church. On a sheet of parchment.

LXVIII.—A demi-figure of a faint holding a book in his left hand. On parchment.

LXIX.—Figure of a man breaking a wand. Study for the Marriage of the B. Virgin. On paper tinted red.

LXX.—S. Dominic disputing with other persons. On like paper.

LXXI.—Two figures seated side by side. A religious standing and in profile. White paper, with the pen and washed (?)

LXXII.—Monk seated disputing with three religious of the same order (?).

LXXIII.—B. Virgin with the Child Jesus upon her knees. White paper, with the pen and washed (?).

In the cartoon following :

LXXIV.—B. Virgin and the Child Jesus in a glory supported by angels and seraphim. Parchment, with the pen and washed.

LXXV.—An angel flying crowned with roses. Study for a Last Judgment. At the bottom of the sheet, in the right-hand corner, are seen lightly marked out, the gate of hell and some devils. White paper, with the pen and washed.

Pitti Gallery. Hall of Justice, No. 399.

LXXVI.—Madonna with the Child Jesus, having on her right S. Dominic and S. John Baptist, on the left, S. Peter and S. Thomas. In the upper angles of the frame: Christ blessing; the Annunciation; the Preaching and Martyrdom of S. Peter of Verona. By Fra Benedetto (?).

Santa Maria Novella. Sacristsy.—Three reliquaries.

LXXVII.—Madonna standing, carrying the Child Jesus. At the top, our Lord letting a crown fall upon the head of his mother. Around the frame, eight angels adoring; at the bottom, two other angels seated and playing the organ. On the pedestal, three medallions: S. Dominic, S. Peter Martyr and S. Thomas Aquinas.

LXXVIII.—The Annunciation, and the Adoration of the Magi, in two pictures. On the pedestal, Blessed Catherine of Sienna; S. Apollonia; S. Margaret; S. Lucy; S. Mary Magdalen; the Holy Virgin; S. Catherine of Alexandria; S. Agnes; S. Cecilia; S. Dorothy; S. Urfula.

LXXIX.—Crowning of the B. Virgin. (Fra Benedetto.)

In the lower part: The Nativity. Four small angels dancing and two others playing the timbrel.—See page 175. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 270.

These three reliquaries have been published by Luigi Bardi, and engraved in five plates folio by R. Redetti; Florence, 1854.

Abbey of Florence.

LXXX.—On an arch of the cloister, S. Benedict recommending silence (?). Painting injured.

Collection of the Brothers Metzger.

LXXXI.—S. Thomas Aquinas receiving the angelic cord (?).

Gallery of F. Lombardi and V. Baldi.

LXXXII.—Martyrdom of SS. Cosmas and Damian. Well preserved.

LXXXIII.—Adoration of the Magi. Injured (?).

ROME.

Vatican.—Chapel of Nicholas V.

This chapel is attached to the apartments of Mgr. de Merode, who kindly facilitated our study of it. It stands on the second story of the pontifical palace, and the entrance into it is in the left-hand angle of the antechamber of Constantine's hall. It is twenty-one feet ten inches in length, by thirteen feet eight inches in breadth. Although it has been many times restored, the preservation of it is still very satisfactory. The west wall has suffered most from damp. The part nearest the altar has been taken off on canvas: an operation in which Italians succeed to a marvel. The chapel of Nicholas V. has been engraved and published at Rome (*Calcographie pontificale*) in 1810, by Francesco Giangiaco, six plates folio. D'Agincourt has also given

a little outline of it in his *Histoire de l'Art*, vol. 6. Pl. cXLV. Some fragments have been given in other works, which we will point out, whilst enumerating the subjects.—See page 236. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 292.

LXXXIV.—History of S. Stephen.

1. S. Stephen receiving deaconship.
2. Distribution of alms.
3. Preaching of S. Stephen. Engraved by Piroli, published in London by W. Ottley. *Florentine schools*. Pl. XL.
4. S. Stephen before the high-priest.
5. S. Stephen led to execution.
6. S. Stephen stoned.

LXXXV.—History of S. Lawrence.

1. S. Lawrence receiving deaconship.
2. Farewell of S. Sixtus and S. Lawrence.
3. Distribution of alms. Engraved by Piroli. *Florentine schools*. Pl. XLI.—By Gatti. *Storia della Pitt. de' Rosini*. Pl. LXII.
4. Condemnation of S. Lawrence.
5. His Martyrdom.

LXXXVI.—The figures decorating the corners are: S. John Chrysostom, S. Leo, S. Athanasius, S. Gregory, S. Augustine, S. Ambrose, S. Bonaventure, S. Thomas Aquinas.

LXXXVII.—On the arched ceiling. The four Evangelists.

Gallery of the Vatican.

LXXXVIII.—Pictures of the gradino at Perugia, in two compartments.

1. Birth of S. Nicholas. S. Nicholas, a child, hearing a sermon. S. Nicholas giving doweries to the young daughters of a gentlemen. S. Nicholas provisioning the town of Myra and saving a vessel in danger.

LXXXIX.—In the Christian Museum attached to the Vatican Library, are three pictures which may be attributed to Beato Angelico, or rather to his brother or to his pupils.

1. The Entering into Jerusalem. Drawing heavy, extremities defective.
2. Adoration of the Magi. Here are again found the same figures as in the compositions of Beato Angelico.

3. Picture above the two preceding ones. It is divided into two subjects: Jesus in the midst of the doctors, and the Transfiguration. The figure of Christ is fine, but very youthful. What does this connection signify? Dogmatic theology and mythical theology?

Corfini Gallery.—Seventh room, Nos. 22, 23, 24.

XC.—Pentecost. A picture restored.

XCI.—The Ascension.

XCII.—Last Judgment. In fine preservation.

These pictures came from a chapel in the neighbourhood of Florence, belonging to the family of Corfini. See page 155.

Valentini Gallery (?).

XCIII.—Fragment of the gradino of the picture of S. Dominic at Fiesole. See page 77.

Gallery of Count Guido di Bisenzio.

No. 44 in the catalogue (?).

XCIV.—A Madonna surrounded with angels and saints.

The two pictures in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, cited by Vasari as being by Beato Angelico, are not by him. The Triumph of S. Thomas is attributed to Filippino Lippi, and the Annunciation to Benozzo Gozzoli (?).

Count de Montalembert cites two other pictures by Beato Angelico at Rome, one in the church of Santa Cecilia, the other in the church of Santa Maria Maddalena (?).

NAPLES.

Bourbon Museum.

Two pictures attributed to Tommaso di Stefano, and catalogued under the Nos. 296, 298.

XCV.—The first (296) represents the Assumption of the B. Virgin; on wood, and ground of gold.

XCVI.—The second (298) represents the Miracle of our Lady at Nives, or the foundation of Santa Maria Maggiore. See page 261.

ORVIETO.

Chapel of the Blessed Virgin.

Great mural painting, on a gold ground.

XCVII.—Christ and a choir of prophets, for the Last Judgment ; finished by Luca Signorelli.

The figures of Christ and of Moses have been engraved by Ales. Mochetti, in the *Storia del Duomo*. Pl. xxxii.—See page 260. V. MARCHESE, t. 1, p. 299.

MONTEFALCO.

Church of the Franciscan Fathers.

XCVIII.—A Crowning of the B. Virgin. A gradino of five pictures, which Professor Rosini attributes to Beato Angelico, and which Marquis Selvatico believes to be by Benozzo Gozzoli, or by some other painter.

TURIN.

Royal Museum.

XCIX.—Two figures of angels. From the collection of the Brothers Metzger of Florence.

C.—A Madonna and the Child Jesus. Sold by Achille Sandrini.

BRESCIA.

Church of S. Alessandro.

CI.—An Annunciation. Figures of natural size, painted on wood in two panels.

This picture was executed by Beato Angelico in 1432, as a curious document proves, found in the chronicle of the convent of S. Alessandro at Brescia, of the order of Servites, taken from the archives of the monastery by Maestro Fra Giovanni Paolo Villa, in 1630. This is the document, which relates all the expenses incurred for the picture.

1. 1432. “*Item la tavola della Nunziata fatta in Fiorenza, la quale depinse fra Giovanni, ducatti nove.*”

Item ducatti ij sono per oro per detta tavola, quali hebbe Fra Giovanni de' Predicatori da Fiesole per dipingere la taola.

1444. Gennaro. Spesa fatta per me et frate Gioseffe col Prior di San-Salvatore quando andassimo a Vicenza per la Nonziata.

Febbraio, primo per spese fatte in far portar la Nonziata da Vicenza a Brescia. L. iii, soldi 19.

Item per parte di pagamento alli maestri, che fecero la bradella della Nonziata.

Marzo. *Item* per alquante taole per far la cassa dell'ancona della Nonziata. L. i., soldi 2."

See V. MARCHESE, vol. 1, pp. 284, 401.

PARIS.

Museum of the Louvre.

Italian Schools, No. 214 in the excellent catalogue of M. Frederic Villot, conservator of the paintings.

CII. The Crowning of the B. Virgin. Height, seven feet ; breadth, six feet eleven inches.

CIII. The gradino includes seven small pictures, all eight-and-a-half inches high, and from nine to twelve inches broad. The subjects are :

1. In the centre, a *Pietà*.
2. Vision of Innocent III.
3. Apostolate of S. Dominic.
4. Resurrection of the young Napoleon.
5. The Ordeal of the Book.
6. The Miraculous Repast.
7. Death of S. Dominic.

Picture executed for the church of Fiesole, and very highly praised by Vasari.—See page 79.

It was published in 1817 by A. G. de Schlegel, and engraved in fifteen plates in outline by Guillaume Ternite.

Some of the beautiful heads were published in lithograph by Rev. Père Arthur Martin, whose loss is so great for Christian art.

A large chromo-lithograph in folio has been recently published by M. Alcan.

At this present time, the imperial calcograph is employed in executing a new engraving.

Museum of Sketches.

CIV.—A drawing on paper tinted yellow, raised with white. A S. Francis in a glory (?) On the reverse, a little stag after nature.

Collection of M. Frederic de Reiset.

CV.—Two figures of Apostles (?).

CVI. Two beautiful drawings. (Nos. 5 and 6 in the catalogue.)

I. Studies of various figures for the composition of the Last Judgment. At the top, study of a hand taken from nature. With the pen and in bistre. On the reverse, head of a monk seen in front. Washed and raised with white. On paper tinted yellow.

CVII.—An Evangelist sitting and reading an open book, which he holds with both hands on his right knee. Washed and raised with white. On paper tinted green.

On the reverse, another Evangelist sitting. He holds a pen in his right hand, and a closed book in his left. With the pen and washed with bistre. On white paper. See page 53.

Collection of M. Gatteaux, member of the Institut.

CVIII.—A charming little picture, eight inches broad by four inches high. Six personages are there represented half-length. In the middle, Moses holding the tables of the law; they are pierced like a painter's pallet. On the one which Moses raises up, are the words, *NON ABEBIS DEOS ALIENOS*. On the right of the legislator, is placed Abraham, the father of believers, holding the knife of sacrifice, symbol of his faith. On his left, Aaron with the rod and in sacerdotal costume. Behind Moses, are two personages, whom no attribute distinguishes; their looks and position express adoration. They are perhaps the patriarchs Isaac and Jacob, whom Scripture unites with their father in speaking of the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Behind Aaron is an angel, as our painter knew so well how to do.

This picture, doubtless, belonged to a gradino, and may represent the Law of Fear. All the figures are turned to the right, as to a common centre, where there was perhaps a Christ, the union of the Old and New Testament. On the other side, doubtless, were S. Peter and S. Paul, and some saints of the Law of Grace.

This picture is painted on a gold ground. The colouring is very soft; the heads are admirable for character and execution. The hands are neglected.

BERLIN.

Royal Museum.

CIX.—Last Judgment, recalling very much by the composition the one in the Gallery of small pictures in the Academy of Fine Arts at Florence. But the execution is very feeble, and makes it thought to be a copy.

CX.—Madonna with the Child Jesus. Ground of damask of gold. On the two sides, are seen, but in very small proportions, S. Dominic and S. Peter Martyr. This picture has been badly restored (?).

CXI.—The kiss of S. Dominic and S. Francis.

CXII.—Appearance of S. Francis to his disciples.

CXIII.—Small pictures badly restored. Of dubious attribution.

MUNICH.

Pinacotheca. (¹)

CXIV.—Three pictures from the convent of S. Marco, representing the legend of SS. Cosmas and Damian.

1. SS. Cosmas and Damian before the proconsul.

2. SS. Cosmas and Damian placed on a cross.

3. SS. Cosmas and Damian thrown into the sea and saved by angels.

CXV.—The Eternal Father in a glory, surrounded with the choir of angels.

CXVI.—Burial of our Lord.— See the *Musées d'Allemagne*, by L. Viardot, p. 103.

¹) In 1860, we remember seeing a small Tableau of Beato Angelico in the Pinacotheca at Munich, of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by numerous angels. The painting measured about fourteen inches high, by about eleven inches wide (as well as we can remember). This does not appear in the Catalogue of the Pinacotheca of 1858 now before us.
—Publisher's Note.

BRUSSELS.

Collection of King Leopold.

CXVII.—A Madonna with the Child Jesus. Two angels are holding up a drapery, three others sitting at the B. Virgin's feet. This picture belonged to the family of Gondi, at Florence.

ENGLAND.

Prince Albert's Collection.

CXVIII.—S. Peter Martyr.

CXIX.—A Madonna with the Child Jesus (?).

CXX.—A Nativity, with a choir of angels above the cot.

These pictures are from the collection of the Brothers Metzger, at Florence.

National Gallery.

CXXI.—The Adoration of the Magi. In tempera, on wood, seven-and-a-half inches high, by one foot six-and-a-half inches wide. Formerly in the collection of Professor Rosini, at Pisa. Purchased from the Lombardi-Baldi Collection at Florence, in 1857.

CXXII.—Christ Triumphant, with the usual banner of triumph in his left hand, in the midst of a choir of angels, some blowing trumpets others playing various musical instruments. On the two sides are kneeling a great crowd of the Blessed :—the Patriarchs ; the Prophets ; the Madonna ; the Apostles ; and the Saints and Martyrs of both sexes : at the extreme ends are the faints of the Dominican Order, in their white robes and black cappas. Altogether two hundred and sixty-six figures, or portions of figures ; many with their names attached, "So beautiful," says Vasari, "that they appear to be truly beings of Paradise."

In tempera, on wood, in five compartments, each twelve-and-a-half inches high by eight-and-a-half inches—two feet one inch wide the sides respectively, and two feet four-and-a-half inches wide the centre picture. Formerly the Predella of an altar in San Domenico, at Fiesole, and sold by the friars about fifty years since to Signor Valentini, Prussian

Conful at Rome. Purchased from his nephew, Signor Gioacchino Valentini, at Rome, in 1860.

W. Young Ottley's Collection.

CXXIII.—The B. Virgin carried to the tomb by the apostles. Little picture from the church of Ognissanti at Florence. Attributed to Giotto by Vasari, and to Beato Angelico by modern critics.—See VASARI, edit. Lemonnier, vol. 1. p. 332.

In the Life of our Lord published by G. B. Nocchi, the same subject is marked as being in Rev. J. Sanfort's Gallery.

CXXIV.—In the house of a private person (?). Two shutters of a tryptich representing, the Elect ascending into Heaven and the Reprobate cast down into Hell.

From the Gallery of Cardinal Fesch.

CXXV.—The Last Judgment.

Padre Marchese (vol. 1, p. 302) says that this picture became the property of the Prince of Canino, but it does not belong to him any more; and we are assured that it is now in England, in the collection of Lord Ward.



ANALYTICAL TABLE.

AGINCOURT (Seroux d'). His *Histoire de l'art par les monuments*, 310. His judgment on Beato Angelico, 310.

AGNES (Saint), represented, 91, 175.

ALBERT THE GREAT, teaching philosophy, 108.

ALBERTI of Bologna. His eulogy on Beato Angelico, 287.

ANDREA of Pisa. His gates of the Baptistry, 18.

ANGELICO (Beato).—His birth, 21. His entrance into the Order of S. Dominic, 22. His different names, 32. His noviciate, 32. His abode at Foligno and Cortona: His artistic studies, 40, 52; after nature, 104. Beato Angelico, priest and theologian, 106. His relations with the artists of the Renaissance, 178, 189. He profits by their progress without falling into their defects, 190. His paintings at the convent of San Marco, 204. He causes S. Antoninus to be nominated Archbishop of Florence, 228. Friend of popes Eugenius IV. and Nicholas V., 230. His last journey to Rome, 234. His intelligence of monumental painting, 243. His labours at Orvieto, 257. Death of Beato Angelico, 264. His likeness, 205, 293. His virtues, 269. His artistic qualifications, 271. Three epochs of his talent, 273. His pupils, 275. Catalogue of his works, 321. Why he has been forgotten, 282, 318. His historians in Italy, Germany and France, 285.

ANGELS. Their types, 84. Represented in a superior manner by Beato Angelico, 86. Embracing the Blessed, 148. Dancing and playing instruments, 169, 170, 173. Choir of Angels, 149, 261.

ANNUNCIATION by Beato Angelico, at Perugia, 58; at Cortona, 63; at Fiesole, 78; at Florence, 119, 174, 213, 214; at Brescia, 335.

ANTHONY (Saint), represented, 89, 166.

ANTONINUS (Saint), friend of Beato Angelico, 35. Represented, 209.

APOSTLES, represented, 147.

ARCH (pointed). Its origin, 181. Its filiation with the rounded arch, 182. Not the form necessary for Christian architecture, 190.

ARCH (rounded). Its Italian origin, 183. Its relations with the pointed arch, 184. Form preferred by Brunelleschi at the commencement of the Renaissance, 185. Quite as Christian as the pointed arch, 190.

ARCHITECTURE. Its supremacy over painting and sculpture, 178. The different periods of architecture with peoples, 179. In antiquity and in the middle ages, 180.

ART. Manifestation of beauty, xi. Aim, principle and means of art, xxi. Whence its power comes, xv. Communicates science and love to intellects and wills, xvi.

Art of God, type of the art of man, xvi. The Word, Art of God, xviii. Art of God in the creation, xix. Just and good, xxi. Art of man must be a prayer and a teaching, xxiv. Vitiating by Adam, regenerated by Christ, xxvi.

Relations of art with the people, 249. Its organization in the middle ages, 249, 254. Three periods of art with a people. The hieratic, learned and naturalistic periods, 5. These periods in Greece and Italy, 7. Christian art under the Old Law, xxx. Compared with pagan art, xxix. Obedient to the law of love, 145. Its decay at the Renaissance, xxxv, 282. False doctrines of art for art and of realism, xxxviii. Utility of a religious association for developing Christian art in France, 308. Pagan art. Its origin, xxvi. Cause of its beauty, greatness and decay, xxix. Ancient art studied by Beato Angelico, 240. Byzantine art, xxxv. Its value, its character, 8.

ARTIST. In the world and in a convent, 73. The Christian artist must study tradition, nature and the antique, 282. His device, 284.

ASSISI. Its importance for the history of Christian art, 50.

ATHANASIUS (Saint), represented, 241.

AUGUSTINE (Saint). His Christian æsthetics, xxxiv. Represented, 89, 166, 208, 225, 242.

BEAUTY. Definition, xiii, xiv. Beauty, natural and moral, xiii, 268. Why beauty pleases the soul, xiv. Moral beauty, basis of all beauty, xxiv. Beauty changed by original sin, xxv.

BENEDETTO (Fra), brother of Beato Angelico. His entrance into the Order of S. Dominic, 23. His co-operation in the works of Beato Angelico, 137. Means of recognizing his pictures, 137. His death, 199. His miniatures in the choir-books at S. Marco, 200.

BENEDICT (Saint), represented, 89, 170, 208.

BENOZZO GOZZOLI, pupil of Beato Angelico. Works at Orvieto, 257. His paintings in the Campo Santo, 276.

BERLIN. Pictures by Beato Angelico, 338.

BERNARD (Saint), represented, 208.

BLESSED (the), represented, 148, 151, 156.

BONAVENTURE (Saint), represented, 242.

BRESCIA. Annunciation by Beato Angelico, 335.

BRUNELLESCHI, architect. His influence on the Renaissance, 178.

Abandons the pointed for the rounded arch, 185.

BRUSSELS. Picture by Beato Angelico, 339.

CATACOMBS. Art regenerated in the Catacombs, 2. Subjects there represented, 3.

CATHEDRAL, (the) in the middle ages. Centre of art, 250. What it is for the people, 250. Cathedral of Florence, 252. Cathedral of Orvieto, its beginning and foundation, 252.

CATHERINE (Saint) of Alexandria, represented, 91, 171.

CATHERINE (Saint) of Sienna, represented, 91, 171, 174.

CECILIA (Saint), represented, 91, 175.

CHRIST. See Jesus Christ.

CHURCH (the). Inspirer and protectrix of Christian art, xxxvi.

CIMABUE, painter. Pupil of the Greek Artists. His superiority over his masters, 11.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS, represented, 135.

CORPORATIONS. See Guilds.

CORTONA. Convent of S. Domenico, 59. Church of the Gesù, 61. Works of Beato Angelico, 322.

COSMAS and DAMIAN (Saints), patrons of the Medici, represented, 166, 167, 207, 225. Their legends, 166, 176.

CRITICISM of works of art in France. Its consequences, xxxviii, 309.

CROWNING OF THE VIRGIN, by Beato Angelico, in the Museum of the Louvre, 79. At Florence, 135, 169, 175, 224.

DAMIAN (Saint), See S. Cosmas.

DAVID, represented, 87, 115, 140, 150, 208.

DESCENT FROM THE CROSS, by Beato Angelico. Academy of Florence, 160. Feelings inspired by this picture, 162.

DOMINIC (Saint). His influence on art in the thirteenth century, xxxvi. His likeness, 103. Represented, 75, 78, 88, 163, 165, 166, 167, 170, 172, 174, 205, 207, 221, 224. His legend at Cortona, 61. At the Louvre, 94. His Order fruitful in artists, why, 23, 28.

DONATELLO, sculptor of the Renaissance, loses the Christian idea, 187.

ENGLAND, Pictures by Beato Angelico, 339.

ENGRAVINGS of the paintings by Beato Angelico, 321.

ETRURIA. Etruscan art distinct from Greek art, 4.

EUCCHARIST. Its institution, 127, 219.

EUGENIUS. IV. At the convent of San Marco, 215. Makes Beato Angelico go to Rome, 228. His life and death, 230.

EVANGELISTS represented, 117, 242. Their symbols explained, 117.

EZECHIEL represented, 110, 116, 141, 209. His vision of the coming of our Lord, painted by Beato Angelico, 112, 115.

FIESOLE, the name of a place, which ought not to be given to Beato Angelico. 33. Convent of San Domenico at Fiesole, 72. Pictures by Beato Angelico, 75, 323.

FLORENCE. Its history in the sixteenth century, 193. Bought by the Medici, 196. Works of Beato Angelico at Florence, 324.

FORM. Exterior form comes from a spiritual form; it is the means of art, xv.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI (Saint). His influence on the arts, xxxvi. His church 50. Represented, 89, 150, 166, 167, 208, 224.

GENTILE DA FABRIANO, not a pupil of Beato Angelico, 275. His style compared with that of Beato Angelico, 275.

GERMANY. Progress of historical science and of Christian art, 299. Catholic schools; Society of Dusseldorf, 306.

GHIBERTI (LORENZO), sculptor. In competition with Beato Angelico, 168. His influence on the Renaissance, 186. His passion for the antique, 186. His gates of the Baptistry at Florence, 19, 186. His qualities and defects, 186.

GIOTTINO. His premature death. His pictures at Assisi and Santa Croce, 15.

GIOTTO, pupil of Cimabue. His Italian style, 12. Compared with Simone Memmi, 14.

GIOVANNI DI PAOLO of Sienna, imitator of Beato Angelico, 278.

GIOVANNI ANTONIO GIOVANELLI, pupil of Beato Angelico, 257, 259, 772.

GIOVANNI DOMINICI (Beato), founder of the Convent of Fiesole, encourages the arts, 30. Represented, 209.

GOD. Perfect Artist, why, xvi. The form of all things eternally in Him, xvii.

GREGORY THE GREAT (Saint), represented, 111, 241. Pope: patron of the arts, 114. His commentary on Ezechiel, 111.

GUIDO, painter, compared with Beato Angelico, 295.

GUILDS of artizans in the middle ages. Their influence on the arts, 167. The Guild of Joiners order a picture by Beato Angelico, 168. Statutes of the Guild of Painters at Sienna, xxxiv.

HELL represented, 148, 151, 156.

HISTORIANS of Beato Angelico, 287.

ICONOGRAPHY. Its importance in art, 46. Pagan Iconography: Christian Iconography; its superiority, 47. Must be studied in manuscripts, 48.

INNOCENT III. His vision of S. Dominic upholding the church of S. John Lateran, 61, 95.

JACOPO POLI, pupil of Beato Angelico, 257.

JEROME (Saint), represented, 163, 170, 208.

JESUS CHRIST. Type and model of the artist, xxvii. His beauty discussed by the Greeks, 9. Type of beauty, 84. His life is the great epopee of Christian art, 105. His birth, 120, 215. Presentation, 66, 122. Christ amongst the Doctors, 124. In the Garden of Olives, 128. Bound, 128. Treated ignominiously, 129, 219. Before the high priest, 129. Carrying his Cross, 130, 220. Stripped of his garments, 131. Fattened to the Cross, 220. Crucified, 75, 132, 167, 205, 207, 222. Christ as a pilgrim, 206. See the Catalogue, 324, 327.

JOHN BAPTIST (Saint), represented, 88, 147, 150, 172, 207.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (Saint), represented, 242.

JOHN EVANGELIST (Saint.) Patron of Artists, 32. Represented, 88, 140.

JOSEPH (Saint), represented, 150.

JUDGMENT (the Last). New and sublime subject of Christian art. Represented on the door of Cathedrals, 146. In the Campo Santo, 16. By Beato Angelico, 147, 149, 153, 155, 156. That in the Sistine Chapel condemned by Aretino and Salvator Rosa, 157.

LANZI. His judgment on Beato Angelico, 294.

LAW OF LOVE, represented, 139. Why with an open book and without arms, 143. It is the law of Christian art, 145.

LAWRENCE (Saint), represented, 90, 163, 167, 207. His history at the Vatican, 238.

LEO (Saint), Pope, represented, 241.

LEO X. His fatal influence on Christian art, 281.

LIFE of our Lord, 105, 235. Of the Blessed Virgin, 65.

LIGHT, compared with God, xviii. Its beauty in nature, xix.

LODGES of Artists in the middle ages, 254.

LOUIS (Saint), King of France, represented, 89.

LUCA SIGNORELLI, continues the paintings of Beato Angelico at Orvieto, 277. Compared with Michael Angelo, 277. May have known Beato Angelico and given information to Vafari, 289.

LUCCA DELLA ROBBIA, a religious and popular sculptor, 187.

MADONNA. See Mary.

MAGI. Adoration of the Magi, 66, 121, 165, 169, 174, 215.

MAN. Masterpiece of creation, xx. His corporeal and spiritual beauty, xxi. Man, an artist, orator, writer, architect, painter and sculptor, xxiii. Why God has created him an artist, xxii. Consequences of his fall for art, xxv.

MARCHESE (P. Vincenzo). His work on the Dominican artists, 295. The best historian of Beato Angelico, 296. His intelligence of Christian art. Rules he has given for it, 299.

MARIA NOVELLA (Santa). Admired by Michael Angelo, 27. Begun by Fra Sisto and Fra Ristoro, and finished by other Dominican artists 27. Reliquaries, 173. Painters who worked at Santa Maria Novella, 172.

MARK (Saint). Patron of the Guild of Joiners, 169. Represented, 167, 169, 207, 225. Convent of S. Marco given to the religious of Fiesole, 197. Choir-books by Fra Benedetto, 200. Paintings in fresco by Beato Angelico, 205.

MARY, THE BLESSED VIRGIN. Type of her, after Beato Angelico, 85. Represented, 57, 60, 61, 76, 77, 150, 161, 166 *bis*, 169, 172, 173, 207, 225. Her Life, 65. She gives the habit of the Order of S. Dominic to Bl. Reginald, 66.

MARY MAGDALEN (Saint), represented, 91, 161, 171, 175, 207.

MASACCIO, painter. His influence on the Renaissance, 178. His qualities and defects, 188.

MEDICI. Patrons and corrupters of the Renaissance, 192. Their history, 194. Giovanni de Medici, 194. Cosimo de Medici. His exile and return, 195. Patron of the religious of Fiesole, and friend of Beato Angelico, 197.

MEMMI (Simone). Compared with Giotto, 14.

MEMLING, of Bruges, compared with Beato Angelico, 277.

MICHAEL (Saint), Archangel, 63, 163.

MICHAEL ANGELO. His admiration for Dominican artists, 27. His defects, cause of the decline, 246.

MICHELINO (Domenico), pupil of Beato Angelico. His picture at Santa Maria dei Fiori, 276.

MINIATURE. Importance of miniature in the history of art, 44. It has formed the Iconography of Christian art, 47. Miniatures in the choir-books at the convent of S. Marco, 200.

MIRACLE of our Lady ad Nives, represented, 262.

MONTALEMBERT (Count de). Services he has rendered to art by his discourses and writings, 315. His description of the Last Judgment at the Academy of Florence, 149. His eulogy on Beato Angelico, 316.

MONTEFALCO. Paintings attributed to Beato Angelico at, 335.

MUNICH. Pictures by Beato Angelico, 338.

MUSEUMS, Inconveniences and utility of, 159.

NAPLES. Bourbon Museum. Pictures by Beato Angelico attributed to Giotto, 261, 334.

NATURE. Intelligence and love of nature in the saints, 69. Studied by Beato Angelico, 52, 104, 274.

NICCOLA OF PISA, studies ancient art, 17. His pulpit in the Cathedral of Siena, 18.

NICHOLAS OF BARI (Saint), represented, 57, 90, 170. His legend, 57.

NICHOLAS V., knew Beato Angelico at Florence, 232. Enlightened patron of the arts and sciences, 232. Writes the epitaph of Beato Angelico, 265.

ORATOR. Artist above all, xxiii.

ORCAGNA, superior to Michael Angelo, in the Campo Santo, 16.

ORDERS, religious. What they have done for Christian art, xxxvi, 255.

ORSEL. His talent and examples, 307.

ORVIETO. Its Cathedral, 248.

PAINTING, Italian. Cause of its development in the thirteenth century, xxxv. Anterior to Cimabue, 8. Mystic painting, 67.

PARIS. Pictures and drawings by Beato Angelico, 336.

PAUL (Saint), represented, 62, 88, 96, 167, 170.

PERUGIA. Works of Beato Angelico, 321.

PERUGINO, ought not to cited as a mystic painter, 278.

PETER (Saint) Apostle. Represented, 62, 88, 96, 163, 166, 170, 172.

PETER (Saint), Dominican martyr. Represented, 62, 78, 90, 163, 166, 167, 171, 173, 174, 206, 208, 224, 225. His martyrdom, 172, 202.

PIETA. What it signifies, 94. Represented, 165, 206.

PINTURICCHIO, compared with Beato Angelico. His paintings, 279.

POMPEII. Female dancers compared with the angels by Beato Angelico, 254.

PROPHETS, represented, 116.

PUPILS of Beato Angelico, 275.

RAOUL ROCLETTE. His error on Christian types, 3.

RAPHAEL, studies the paintings by Beato Angelico at S. Marco, 280. His genius. He is neither a saint nor an apostle, 280.

RELIQUARIES of Santa Maria Novella, 173.

RENAISSANCE. Its commencement in the fifteenth century, 178. Its decline, xxxvii, 282.

RIO. His beautiful work on Christian painting in Italy, 312. His judgment on Beato Angelico, 313.

ROME. Its influence on the artists of the Renaissance, 227. And on Beato Angelico, 234. Works by Beato Angelico there, 332.

RUMOHR. His mission in Italy. His researches on Christian art, 305.

SACRAMENTS, figured by the seven-branched candlestick, 142.

SANO DI PIETRO, of Sienna. An imitator of Beato Angelico, 278.

SCHLEGEL (Aug. Will.). His notice on Beato Angelico, 301. Compares ancient and modern art, 303. His error on the subject of S. Louis, King of France, 89.

SCHOOLS OF PAINTING. Their unity in the middle ages, 8. School of Sienna. Its relations with Beato Angelico, 51, 278. School of Florence. Its naturalistic tendencies, 40. School of Giotto, 268. That of Perugino not specially the mystic school, 278.

SCIENCE of art, 45. Sciences in the middle ages, 108.

SCULPTURE. Influence of sculpture on painting, 16. School of Pisa previous to Cimabue, 17.

SIENNA. School of Sienna. Its priority to that of Florence, 8. Studied by Beato Angelico, 51.

SOUL. Form of the body. Its plastic power, xxvi.

STEPHEN (Saint), represented, 90, 150, 163, 171. His life, 236.

SYMBOL of the prophets and apostles, 140. Division of it into articles according to S. Thomas Aquinas and Durandus, 141.

TADDEO GADDI, pupil of Giotto. His life of our Lady in Santa Croce at Florence, 15.

TESTAMENTS (the two), represented, 110, 115.

THEOLOGY, queen of sciences and arts, 109.

THOMAS AQUINAS (Saint), represented, 63, 76, 78, 174, 207, 208, 225 *bis*. Teaching theology, 108. Light of the Church, 174.

TRANSFIGURATION, represented, 124, 218.

TRINITY (the Holy), represented, 166.

TRUTH, historical. In art does not consist in the exactness of material details, 95.

TYPES. What types are, 82. Type of Jesus Christ, 84. Of the Blessed Virgin, 84. Of the Angels, 84.

UMBRIA. Its history, 42. Beato Angelico's residence there, 44.

UNITY. Essence of beauty, xiii. Need of it for the intellect and will, xiv.

URSULA (Saint), represented, 91, 175.

VASARI. Error regarding Beato Angelico, 229. Authorities which

he had in writing his *Life*, 289. His enthusiasm for Beato Angelico, 79, 292.

VATICAN. Chapels painted by Beato Angelico, 235. Pagan art at the Vatican, 246.

VINCENT, (Saint), deacon and martyr, represented, 63.

VIRGIN, The Blessed Virgin. See MARY.

ZACHARIAS (Saint) writing the name of S. John Baptist, 171.

ZANOBI STROZZI, pupil of Beato Angelico, 276.

Vidit FR. V. H. FERRERI, O.P., Conv. Annun, Supprior,

S. Th. Lector, et Libr. Revisor,

Vidit FR. VINCENTIUS KING, O.P., S. Th. Lector, et Libr.

Revisor.

Attentâ relatione revisorum nostri Ordinis à nobis designatorum super operâ cui titulus, *Life of Beato Angelico da Fiesole, of the Order of Friar-Preachers. Translated, &c., &c.*, eandem typis mandari permittimus.

F. THOMAS NICKOLDS,

S. Th. Lector, Præd. Gen., et Prior Provinc. Ord. Præd. in Angliâ.



TABLE OF CHAPTERS.

| | <i>Page.</i> |
|--|--------------|
| INTRODUCTION. | xi |
| CHAPTER I. Painting in Italy before Beato Angelico . | 1 |
| CHAPTER II. Birth of Beato Angelico.—His entrance into the Order of S. Dominic (1387- 1408). | 21 |
| CHAPTER III. Beato Angelico's residence at Foligno and Cortona.—His artistic studies (1408- 1418). | 37 |
| CHAPTER IV. The first works of Beato Angelico (1408- 1418). | 55 |
| CHAPTER V. Return to the Convent of Fiesole.—Paint- ings executed at that period.—The Coronation of the Virgin, in the Louvre, (1418-1436). | 71 |
| CHAPTER VI. Beato Angelico as a Theologian.—Life of our Lord. | 105 |
| CHAPTER VII. The Law of Love.—The Last Judgment . | 139 |
| CHAPTER VIII. Pictures by Beato Angelico in the Museums and Churches of Florence. | 159 |
| CHAPTER IX. Beato Angelico at Florence.—His rela- tions with Brunelleschi, Ghiberti and Masaccio. | 177 |
| CHAPTER X. Foundation of the Convent of San Marco by Cosimo de Medici.—Choir-books by Fra Benedetto. | 192 |
| CHAPTER XI. Convent of San Marco.—Paintings in the cloister and in the cells. | 204 |
| CHAPTER XII. Beato Angelico at Rome.—Chapel of the Vatican, (1445-1455). | 227 |
| CHAPTER XIII. Paintings in the Cathedral of Orvieto. —Pictures at Naples. | 248 |
| CHAPTER XIV. Death of Beato Angelico.—His eulogy.— His pupils and his influence. | 264 |
| CHAPTER XV. Beato Angelico da Fiesole judged in Italy, Germany and France. | 285 |
| CATALOGUE OF THE WORKS OF BEATO ANGELICO. | 321 |

ERRATUM.

Page 204, last line. For "*or* Rome" read, "*for* Rome."

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